

THE POETIC MURDERER

by

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**PART 1**  
**LIQUORICE ROOT**



## CHAPTER 1

It was late summer, on an easy-breezy day in Copenhagen, the blowing of the wind gentled all citizens regardless of shoe size, faith, and/or ice cream taste.

Courageously, the sheep-shy sun pushed and shoved the thick wool of clouds, like an old dress in a dressing room. And reason and sense and feeling were interweaving to the delight of the sandal-shoed citizens lazily weaving through the city's dizzying streets.

Attached to the azure sky was a lamp, so that one could better see his own doings. A background *bzzzzzz!* Around the lamp hummed hornets—many. Then, like a pan boiling over, the streets emptied, doors were slammed shut and shutters thrown open. Soon enough, the lamp was switched off. The lamp that had forbade the city from keeping its secrets had burnt out. That was when they gathered. Not all at once, but connecting through the streets, interweaving their way past each other, never quite connecting, reminiscent of a Joyce novel.

But the buzz only followed one of them.

A bike of hornets slipped through the upper window crack into the pantry. The night had stifled the heat and the cold had dulled their buzz, so they retreated inside. The hornets lacked provisions and, luckily, the house provided many.

A car stopped, and a person popped into vision. The man carried something heavy on his back. It was a female corpse wrapped up in rice paper. Her pink legs were flopping like shrimp as the man struggled

up the porch steps. He fumbled in his pocket, rummaging against the normal collection of lint and pennies that in that moment seemed bizarre with her body balanced precariously on his back. He couldn't help noticing how strangely heavy she was. How strong she had been. Still, it had ended well enough.

Moments later, he unlocked the front door. On entering, the man dropped the female corpse. Her eyes goggled, eel-like, out of the human sushi roll onto the tiled floor. The hornets sensed the heat from the freshly dead body and swarmed towards it, and the man. The man swung his arms back and forth. One hornet stung the sweating man. It was bad; the fire sizzled through his veins, reaching his stomach and forcing him to retch.

Bloodied from the wound etched into his arm, he punched the alpha hornet in its smirking face and screamed: "Fuck off, you silly tit."

With flailing hands, he smashed dead a few hornets. Exhausted from this insect-busting battle, he rolled a lop-sided cigarette, inhaling as he stared at the corpse. His arm swelled, as the wound from the hornet sting began to beat in time to his heart. He could feel the poison making its way to his brain. He tried to suck out the poison, but failed, and died in the night. At least, he had thought, as the poison took its final grasp and he felt himself begin to lose consciousness, nobody should be able to find him in the coming weeks, nor, indeed, the corpse of the woman.

Detective 00 Hansen sat at his shiny wooden desk, admiring his reflection in the varnished oak. He was

a young fox in this business, but already had success. He had leads and people to chase, and he had secrets, and he had a lot of sex.

A fine piece of jazz infused into the Detective, putting him in the mood for work. Hansen got into the groove of grinding the grain of substantial thoughts.

On the kitchen table lay a swag of eggs, flour, sugar, milk, and a zwieback recipe, a sweet, crisp biscuit that his mother used to make when he was a child.

*Whiiiiiiiiieee!* A tea pot was boiling, whistling like a flute player. The Detective was often distracted, as working hard was hardly working. To think sharply, he seasoned his boiling head with salt and pepper.

That morning, he had received a mysterious letter. It had been shoved under his front door, unnoticed above the smell of burning toast. It was only when Hansen had paused at the mirror beside the door, half-dancing to the jazz track and half-pouting at his handsome reflection, that his eyes became distracted by the crumpled manila envelope.

It would normally take something extraordinary to tear the Detective away from teasing his thick, auburn hair, but he knew straight away, or at least, that's what he convinced himself after he had read through the letter, that this was something unusual. Puzzling. Ponderous. Poignantly poetic.



*Dear Detective,*

*From here on, a series of murders will commence to strangle your intellect. Stop me, catch me, and end my urge, as if I care.*

*To hygge<sup>1</sup>, or not to hygge, that is the question—  
Whether 'tis nobler in the biz to hustle  
The lift and pay of contagious fortune,  
Or to lie down like Little Mermaid and watch,  
And, by lying down, escaping? To smile, to hygge—  
No more—and by a plateful of hedge to say we end  
To swallow, the sausage of discontent  
That flesh and hair grows—'tis a separation,  
Shallowly swims that fish! To smile, to hygge.  
To hygge, enhances the dream—ay, I want that app!  
For in that Tinder app may sex to you just come,  
When we have hassel-hoff'd this mortal oil,  
Come, give applause! There's a feast abreast  
That makes the end of the line hungry at night.*

*May the force bewig you,  
M.*

The Detective paused, confused at the lyrical musings. He was used to getting unusual mail, fans often sent him bizarre collections of objects, from underwear to hats with taxidermied animals posed glamorously on top. They also sent him letters, but they were rarely as threatening, or as eloquent, as this

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<sup>1</sup> Hygge is a phrase in the Danish culture for a cosy and comfortable togetherness that engenders a feeling of contentment and well-being.

one. Nor did they usually intimidate the Detective by revealing their intentions to commit murder. That, he admitted to himself, was quite unusual.

When he was quite dressed for peak summer weather, the Detective pulled out of the dizzying periphery of imagination, sprinkled some scent on himself, and, as usual, distributed into different pockets his pipe-case, matches, a black notebook, and a few miracle berries<sup>2</sup> with their childhood connotations and bunch of charms.

He swaggered his arse of unstoppable youth into the hall, and, feeling just *hygge*, and perfectly healthy despite the threat of death on his mind, went, with a slight jaunt in each step, outside.

The world surrounding him placed subtle demands on his attention, jolting him, quite happily, out of his thoughts. The Detective strolled, with both legs and part of his brain, to Café Flash.

Café Flash was haunt of Hansen's, a coffee shop in downtown Copenhagen, with luxurious armchairs that allowed the sitter to embrace the posture of a wealthy and powerful businessman. The chairs faced the high, arched windows that observed the bustling street outside. It was perfect for observing, and being observed. It was here, in the presence of an extra-grande tea, that he entertained the enigma of the mysterious letter.

What a weird read! By Shennong, Father of Tea, what did all this gibberish mean? And who was M? A poet announcing his own crime. Whoever had

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<sup>2</sup> The miracle berry, when eaten, makes not only sour foods subsequently consumed taste sweet, but also reveals to the consumer the unencumbered truth.

snuck the letter underneath the Detective's door was going to kill. He had been so close to the Detective, and his beautifully combed hair. Hansen should have heard the footsteps, seen the light disappear under the crack in the door as someone approached. But the writer had come and gone, as easily as the tide takes sleeping sailors into a storm. It was a bad omen and one which Hansen would rather be excluded from.

A month or two ago, a binge watch on Netflix had left Hansen feeling low and unintelligent. Inspired to improve his mental cognition, he had forced himself onto the documentaries, discovering a TED Talk on how Elvis Presley became the King of Metaphors. Ever since, the Detective's thoughts had translated into a new language. One that was pretty handy, and was tied to what was spontaneous, intuitive, simple, untrained, and natural; nothing was ever as before.

For several weeks his wife was all shook up. Suddenly, everybody seemed in awe of him. People stopped and smiled at him in the street. Women's eyes followed him as he walked, they bought him drinks and glared at his wedding ring. He felt that the world was in love with him, and it was requited. He was on top.

But now, he had received this mysterious letter that threatened to tear these hygge times down.

On entering Café Flash the other customers had given him odd looks. To play it safe he drank his tea with temperate milk. When the Detective's tea had been drunk, leaving that awful taste of slightly spoiled milk on his tongue, he left the café and sat on one of the benches at the pond in the Royal Garden,

pondering. The sun put on a cloudless smile, it was one of those days where the sky seemed endless, the sun didn't seem to mind being alone with Hansen. It was fond of him and shone without worry. The air was filled with the tepid, haziness of mid-summer. It was very easy for Hansen to fall asleep.

*Alice In Wonder—landing into the depths of the inner garden, he picked the myriad of flowers that loved the sensation. As he picked the flowers, visionary joy overwhelmed and fascinated him, and all this culminated in a sudden realisation: that although he usually refused to take poets seriously, considering them oversensitive with a tendency to overreact, this letter was too serious to ignore—a warning with severe force. The tug between experience and intuition strained his stomach.*

A brief fart occurred like a burp and perfumed the air mirabelle. The Detective awoke with a start and glanced awkwardly around. But Hansen already knew he was alone really, uncaught in his inevitable humanness. Enveloped in such a sweet odour Hansen went to his office.

Hansen liked his office. It was above a theatre, so he often heard the actors rehearsing through the bare floorboards. The blinds never opened, leaving the smoke-blasted wallpaper illuminated only with thin strips of light, stolen from the square beneath.

He had rented it a few years ago from an old lady who now lived in Tuscany, on a vineyard. Despite the basic surroundings, he enjoyed the squalor of it all. Often pretending, as he sat smoking at his desk, that he was a detective in one of those cheap, hardboiled fiction novels.

He entered the fly-infested kitchen, where his coffee stood not ready. He paused in the silence, used to hearing his secretary, Monica Mojito, dancing about in her stiletto boots and blasting pop music, it was weird that she didn't seem to be twerking around. The Detective did the maths. Mysterious letter, plus the sweet odour, divided by Monica's uncommon absence. Undoubtedly, the ridiculous peace in Copenhagen was coming to an end. A professional killer with a devastating agenda written in the bad books was about to hit town. This was big. Too big for the police. Hygge times and a delicate touch were demanded. A case perfectly suited for Detective OO Hansen's command.

A sudden exclamation occurred from the darkness drenched bowels of his mind: "Isn't the moo the miaow of the cow?"

It was true, at times the Detective did tend to get lost in the hallowed halls of his mind museum and overlook the more tedious of details.

Indeed, he had to be very careful with his investigations. Very, very careful! It was like Karate Kid. First, he had to do the homework and then figure it out entirely on his own. Work alone. The Detective liked to work alone. Swiftly, he left a note for Monica Mojito. *Take the rest of the week off Moni, I've got a new case!*

He grabbed his coat with the endless pockets and off he was, going home, blossoming with thoughts of fun, for Hansen only wanted to have fun, the serious nature of his work demanded it.

## CHAPTER 2

The Detective was home. He was alone. And the mystery of the poem haunted him. Rain clouds gathered for a water fight in the sky. The house was dull in the afternoon rain and Hansen had nothing to do but watch as the droplets raced down the window-pane, mixing with the grime at the bottom.

As consciousness took over, Hansen dressed freshly, always weather appropriate, in his lady-bird origami raincoat and fashionable ant sandals, not forgetting his old pipe.

Hansen would sort out his thoughts during a long walk in the Botanical Garden. The ant sandals carried him like the slaves of Caesar. Hansen had bought them from an artisan pop-up store, 100% organic, no carbon footprint, and no child labour (at least, if one did not look too closely).

There were chestnuts falling in the colour of Kermit bearing spiky fruits, ducks making duck faces, and a beautiful woman sat on the green, pinching her apples. Hansen approached like a waitress with a long-desired dish and whispered the code word: "Aubergine."

The apple seller smiled at him. She knew that they would never meet again as young as they were now, she readjusted her skirt and got wet. (The grass was moist from the morning dew.) Then he came very close to her and nibbled softly on her firm apples. The taste was persuasive, and he purchased seven kilos of the *Delicious Cox*.

He carried the apples with him as he wandered along the leaf-strewn pathway. The Detective's mind

was fresh and free, like the two new sneakers lacing from a twig on a tree. Then, just as he reached the pond's left hip, a strange sound of caution entered his ears mind-gropingly. He jumped back.

*Pow! Pow!*

Two gunshots barked from the underwood, the bullets flying through the space that Hansen's head had just evacuated. Target missed.

Hansen looked wildly around, searching for the gunman, expecting another bullet to come flying at him. He ran backwards, zig-zagging, scanning the area. There! A greasy-haired man in a stained bomber jacket was running, he was holding a gun down by his side. The sniper was getting away. He raised the gun a final time, shooting his last few bullets. Hansen hurried backwards out of range. With fox-like eyes open, the Detective knew that the sniper would have to reload if he wanted to shoot again.

Hansen pursued, caught, and smacked the attacker down to his knees to let him feast on his own sickness.

*BAM! BAM! BAM!* Furiously, he bread-slapped him dizzy with stale rye bread from last week, and finished him off with a squeeze of lime squirted into the eyes. Only then, he recognised that this was the notorious shrub molester, Dick Aster. His bushy moustache was now seeped with blood from the attack of the rye bread. His yellow eyes fixed on the Detective furiously. The Detective shrugged indifferently and took the bush lover into custody. The next day the local newspaper headlined:

## **Detective 00 Hansen Survives Shooting—Notorious Shrub Molester Dick Aster Taken into Custody**

The Detective basked in the glory of a catch for the next few days. He had almost forgotten about the strange poem and the threats to commit murder. Instead he spent his time brunching and lunching. Once again, the Detective's stomach shouted: *HUNGER!*

It was time for a second lunch. Yet before he could do so, a pack of fawns in season stopped him and shot him with their cameras. The Detective was hip. He made a flamingo pose.

His likes on social media had skyrocketed after his capture of the shrub molester, Dick Aster. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat. A whatever of Whatsappers. Such a rub was in the debt of others. Hansen did not understand the ragout of rhetoric on social media. Too busy, he was, and hungry—half hungry, half angry.

For approximately two minutes and thirty-seven seconds, the shining sun bleached the hairs on his arms into silver needles. This was exactly the average time of his white tea's steeping until the flavour reached its delicious height. Coincidence? Unlikely. His body was craving refreshment.

His favourite pizza restaurant, City Wok, was on Nonsensegade.

"I'd like a Miles Davis pizza, with an extra portion of love!" Hansen sang at the waiter, Cedrick, as he passed.

"Yes, here!" Cedrick threw a cold pizza at him brusquely, concentrating on serving two broccoli



babes, who were fanning themselves with greasy serviettes. Hansen smiled at them, knowing one of them slightly from celebrity parties and visiting the same haunts. They were both instantly recognisable from their social media empire, appearing on prime-time reality television and running fitness blogs. They threw Hansen sparkling smiles before returning to their salads.

Hansen glanced at the coagulated cheese on his slice, undeterred, he nibbled the slice down to a wedge.

“Sorry Cedrick,” He leaned over the counter, ignoring Cedrick who tried to bat him out of the way. “I am very busy, there is a murderer in town!”

The waiter scowled at him, revealing his wrinkles brought on, in part, by the lack of tips. Hansen thought he seemed annoyingly underwhelmed by this news. The two ethical broccoli babes, however, gaped at him as he wandered off.

“Who is that?” one babe asked the other, while turning her fork on a plateful of hedge.

“oo Hansen! He has the licence to chill.”

Filled like a cow with a belly full of cheese and a first clue propelling his step, Hansen strolled back to his office. He had to check the poem again. Was the mysterious writer perhaps referring to the broccoli babes? The poem had mentioned something about a plateful of hedge, and the women were well-known for their vegan, plant-based diet. They were certainly famous in the city, and many people were envious of them, but was that enough to commit murder?

On entering his office he hesitated. Like a snail the Detective articulated space without altering his shape. He sat down at his desk and studied the poem. But it made no sense!

Coffee break.

“Espresso, single or double,” Monica Mojito asked the Detective with Pikachu eyes.

“I’ll single about it, ha-ha.”

Monica neither laughed nor smiled. Her rabbit, Carrot, had died. That’s why she had taken a few days off. She was typing on her phone non-stop. She was very emotional.

The Detective’s smile lingered awkwardly, before he turned away, pretending to re-read the poem once again.

“Well, double then.” The Detective would need it strong if Monica kept this up. “How’s the graphologist’s report coming along—is it ready?”

“Yeah. What do ya think?” Monica replied, her tone slightly more upbeat. She had spoken without looking up, hunched over a piece of paper. The Detective leaned over her and glanced at the report. His eyes sparkled as the blur of lines and shapes connected.

“Where’s Pétur tonight? At home?”

“Yeah, said he’d got in some beers for you.” Monica smirked, reading Hansen’s mind. She met his gaze before tapping the report with a long, bedazzled fingernail. “Complete gold this, bro.” She added.

The Detective nodded. It was perfect.

The Detective had hooked a reel big fish and the guy who could help, graphologist Pétur Pan (born Carl Diem), was drinking beer at home.

*THIRST!* Now the thirst centre in Hansen's brain activated. But there was time for everything.

As he screened the desk for beverages, Monica examined his enviable posterior. More deeply than ever, the longing for the primal power address poured from her very eyes as she passed him by: *Be-bop-da-bubble-butt-bop-da-bubble-butt-be-bop-da-bubble-butt-bop-da-bubble-butt*. She was very modern.

With a can of Loco Coco<sup>3</sup> in his hands and glacier-like rapidity, the Detective strolled off to the home of the graphologist Pétur Pan.

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<sup>3</sup> Loco Coco is a primitive beverage made from coconut water. It freshens the drinker's vitality and sparkle.

### CHAPTER 3

Lust for the linguistic bubbled up as oo (Rápido) Hansen reached the turning from Clownwardsgade. The small alleyway which led to Pétur Pan's home was empty and dark. The Detective's shiny shoes slipped on the damp cobbles and Hansen almost fell into the gutter. He caught himself and looked down at the filth racing from the city, pushed along by the rainwater rushing down the street. The raging tiger in the sky had broken cover for a while.

The alleyway opened up into a wide expanse where tumbled down houses and once-forgotten warehouses were now being transformed into loft apartments, independent coffee shops and co-working spaces.

A crane fished for whales of bricks along the graffiti-tattooed walls, which bore expressions of frozen love and rage-induced politics. *Gentrifyou*, *Keep it LIDL*, and *Vanarchy – vaginal anarchy*.

Little is wisdom, and wisdom is white bread. Culture and climate changed and rain clouds gathered and brewed. In slow motion, the backlit rain drops served as refreshments.

In the periphery of the eye a kiosk human, with a beer-tasting beverage in his hand, stood precariously on the corner like a Jenga tower. The Detective was tempted to nudge him, dislodging his grasp on reality, but he held his shit together. Too easy, too busy.

The Detective edged past kids in beanies raging about the lack of Wi-Fi and decent coffee, meanwhile ice sheets in Greenland were melting vastly. On the

edge of the city high cliffs twerked steeply in ocean weather. Dancing foam waved out and in. And cliffs and seas esteemed each other while strangers on the metro flinched at a glance.

Enveloped in a flamboyant dress and armed with a potato peeler, Pétur's assistant answered the door with a pearly white smile. Pétur's handsome assistant had a soft-spot for the Detective, most people did, especially right after he had made the headlines. Flattered, the Detective winked hello and went ahead with a baguette in his hands. Pétur's apartment was in one of the fancy new-build blocks, with a thrift store and record shop on the ground floor and an indoor garden in the hallways. Pétur himself had lots of plants, including various cacti hanging from the ceiling in glass pots. Hansen ducked underneath them as he clattered down Pétur's cluttered hallway, his shoes squeaking on the stained wood floor. Pétur was sat with the door open in his office, weed smoke had filled his chic fabrics with odour, his pine furniture was marked with ash stains. The whole room gave off an aura of a man too old for his lifestyle. The furniture was cheap and disposable, easy to change as fashions dictate, unfortunately for Pétur, this didn't apply to his appearance.

*"Whabba-dabba-doobie-dis! Pétur, Carlo and Cliff, I'm here for the analysis of the mysterious letter."* Hansen said, awakening Pétur from a daze and sitting down in the hard, plastic chair opposite him. Pétur had ears like oven mittens, smoked dope like there was no tomorrow, and had two surviving hairs which campaigned for sustainability on his head.

Hansen often thought these hairs controlled Pétur, and a slight tug on either one would cause him to lapse into a state of unmentionable perverseness. Hansen believed they had such control over Pétur he had christened them into the Catholic faith and named them Carlo and Cliff.

The Detective disrobed and placed his shoes on the floor. He was sneezing. Pétur sat pumpkin-bellied at his desk, breathing.

“Yes, yes, yes. The poet, the poet, the poet,” he gasped. (Carlo and Cliff always repeated Pétur’s words.) “The handwriting is unique—genderless; no nationality; dresses up in women’s garments; hair like a matted mammoth; no pets, but parents.” He moved an ash-tray around unnecessarily, clearly anticipating a smoke.

Hansen considered the graphologist’s words.

The report Pétur had faxed to Monica had said as much, but how did he know all this? “You can see all this in the handwriting?” Hansen asked suspiciously.

“Yes, yes, yes. The poet, the poet, the poet.” Pétur’s desk was covered with scattered papers— among those, a few poems. He didn’t meet Hansen’s gaze.

Inklings gave signals.

The Detective went to the bathroom and uncoiled his penis. Then he dropped a few welfare bombs to baffle the toilet. Little stunts like these were always possible.

It was still raining. A flock of wet douches smacked relentlessly upon the window. The bathroom window was open. Hansen had had a *Miles Davis* pizza for lunch. The explicit information

commenced to operate in his high-tuned blender of a brain.

“Beer?” Pétur asked as the Detective returned.

“Thanks Pétur, but I must go—someone has to stop this peculiar poet before something terrible happens.”

The Detective was off, out of Pétur’s apartment without even a sip of alcohol. This poet was serious, he could tell from Pétur’s nervousness. The handwriting must have betrayed the lunacy of the villain. The Detective had to put a stop to it.

## CHAPTER 4

The Detective walked to the zoo to find his antelope, Don Cindy. There it was, playing poker with its friends, Freya Fox and Fridtjof Joker. Don Cindy was a refugee from the zoo and an equal partner to the Detective. She came back only to visit, maintaining her friendships with the, as yet untamed, animals. For years Don Cindy had been considered herself untameable.

Hansen had visited the zoo years ago, looking for something to do on a rare day off. Due to budget cuts, the zoo was selling off some of its antelopes for personal transportation. Hansen had joined the crowd gathered around the enclosure. The idea of an antelope to commute to work on had enthralled Hansen. He pushed his way through the other customers and found Don Cindy at the back of the enclosure, retreating away from the crowd. She had the hooves of a stallion and a mane to match Hansen's. The Detective had enquired whether she was for sale.

"At times sedate and gentle, then dynamic and wild, only someone with a pure heart would be able to ride on her," zoo director Saskia Salmiak had said.

Hansen left the enclosure, not wanting to scare the antelope, but he came back weekly and watched as other men tried to straddle Don Cindy and were immediately thrown off. So, she remained in the zoo, untamed. Then, one day, Detective oo Hansen strolled along her enclosure and, in the heat of the moment, uninhibitedly hopped over the fence,



and his ass married Don Cindy's back, so that he could ride away with her. Since then, they had been best friends. That day was also when the Detective met his wife, Chi-Pie.

As if fallen from the sky, she had looked past the pandas' enclosure at the Detective in childlike wonderment. By the spontaneity of sunshine, he'd asked her whether she had a pure heart too, and wished to hop onto Don Cindy's back to go for a ride. Everything was lit up by her. She was the smile that brightened the sky, so that her rare flower would appear in full bloom. And she possessed a beautiful, mysterious, exceptional shine, which carried the Detective into a fairyland, where he felt the spring of excitement with tenderness, like that he remembered feeling on the first day of the summer holidays in his early childhood. Extraordinary times ensued, as she said, 'Yes!' not with words, but with a smile that made the fine hairs of his forearms stand skywards. She had hopped onto Don Cindy's back, and desire and intuition finally combined.



Chi-Pie

Having retrieved Don Cindy from a very successful poker match, Hansen had ridden to the nearby Park of the Duck Delta. The Detective saluted flora and fauna and chilled his arse on the kiwi-green grass. The roars from the sky tiger had long been silenced, put to sleep by the golden licks of the sun. Hansen closed his eyes. Don Cindy was beside him, her tail flicking up to swat the occasional buzz that threatened to disturb him.

To sleep... to dream...

*A herd of cows grazed on a pasture. The white ones yielded milk, the brown ones cacao, and the black ones coffee. For cream, one had to shake a white cow. Wow!*

*In a pond, three flamingos danced the Watusi to the sound of Flipper singing Beatles' songs. Broccoli and liquorice began to fall from the sky. Suddenly, a horizontal door on the grass popped open and Spike Myson appeared with a white tiger, and the white tiger ripped apart a brown cow. Disappointed by the sweet taste, the tiger desisted from chewing. It looked disgusted. Cacao was everywhere but there were neither glasses, nor straws.*

*Spike Myson took a bite from the cow's ear and then Saturn fell from the sky. As it crashed to the earth it exploded into a trillion smithereens of popcorn. Then a rope dropped. Superman swift, Hansen grabbed it at the last second and the clouds carried him out of the candy zone.*

Monica had tried to locate the Detective with the app Find-My-Boss. The glowing blue dot that represented her path to the Detective had led her to the park, but the app deserted her when the road ended. She wandered around and bought herself some candy floss, the mixture of sweetness, emptiness and

ultimate disappointment reminded her unflatteringly of her boss, and she thought it might help her find him. Sure enough, she came across him shortly afterwards, drawn in by the loud snoring. He was asleep on the grass.

Don Cindy nudged Monica, unsure of this new intruder. Monica pacified her with a pat. It was good that the Detective had Don Cindy to watch out for him, especially with a killer on the loose.

Although, Monica couldn't imagine anything happening here. The park was calm, in a busy sort of way. Only an apple seller seemed to be paying attention to them. She was watching the Detective from across the pond, biting into an apple with a devilish crunch. Monica paused, before licking her finger and putting a swirl of candy floss into the Detective's open hand. She tickled his nose until he stirred then ran.

The Detective woke with candy floss on his face. A sugar shock brought him back onto reality's legs. It was four o'clock. The openness of the daisies' petals disclosed this.

Drowsy, the Detective looked around through blurry eyes. The lady Hansen had bought some *Delicious Cox* from was waving her apples at a passing business man. This disappointed the Detective, even though he was aware she sold her apples elsewhere, it was still a shock to see it first-hand. Hansen stood up, shaking off the mud that was still relaxing on his trousers.

Detective oo Hansen climbed up on to Don Cindy—an aesthetically pleasing vision, like a beer with a stable head—and whipped her into motion.

Refreshed by the breeze that caressed Hansen's hair, they left the park and Don Cindy was now elbowing her way through the dense zoo traffic.

Meanwhile Hansen belaboured his mandolin, having retrieved it from his shoulder bag. He plucked the notes majestically from the strings. The strings were always ready. The Detective liked that. Never did he tire of telling his wife this. He was a decent player. And a safe antelope rider.

The hypnotic spell of the notes lulled the other animals in the zoo to sleep, leaving Don Cindy to gallop gracefully. They were only interrupted by a herd of Pokémon Go nerds with curd faces and chive hair stirred by yoghurt thoughts.

The Detective swerved their inconsiderate meanderings and rode indifferently by.

The Detective had given Don Cindy the scent of the murderer's letter and she was on mystery's tail. She ran faster and faster and faster. They left the zoo, paced through Falcon Alley and shot up Hunter's Castle Avenue, passing through seductive side streets.

She was leading Hansen out of the city now, towards the coast and the mist that stood resolutely between them and the sea. Just as Hansen thought Don Cindy would gallop straight through the mist, drenching them both in the thin moisture filled with diesel fumes and factory smoke, she stopped abruptly. Hansen dismounted and squinted into the mist. They were stood on the short cliffs that led down to the sea. Rocks tumbled over each other in a century-old race to become the sand that lined the shore. The rocks that had already won met the sea,

but it retreated from them quickly, leaving them pale and broken.

It began to rain, the droplets choking the sea and causing it to foam and splutter. Hansen followed Don Cindy to a crack in the small cliff that lined the beach.

The crack opened up into a cavern, the darkness running away from Hansen in the light of his phone.

He sat on the cave floor, the droplets from deep inside the cave walls echoing like whispers around

him. He was very cold, but also very dry. The lady-bird origami raincoat protected him. It was July. More rain than one can cry. It was very chilly. He observed

his breath in the wind wafting and wilting, wilting and wafting, constantly before him in the cold, and he rested for a while, lighting his pipe in the gloom. Then

he saw a shadow coming, leaping, twisting and dancing. For a moment, the shadow stood still, with skilfully sliding feet hovering over the grainy ground, then it leapt and ran and rose again.

*“Woo! Hee-hee! Come on!”* a high-pitched voice squeaked like a weirdo on the metro. The unknown thing passed the skirt of shadow and light, merging at the cusp of beach and cave. Norway! It was Mikkel Jørgensen. One could infer this from his thrilling jacket in candy-apple-red, matching trousers, anti-gravity shoes and an applaudable moustache. Motionless as a mushroom, he cast a glance at the Detective. Hansen squinted at him, rising from the cold, stone floor.

“This is Detective 00 Hansen. State your name and CPR number.” The Detective yelled in the authoritative tone he liked to use when on a case.

*"Hee-hee! Come on!"* Mikkel Jørgensen grunted obscurely.

"I don't want to repeat it, Mr Jørgensen—I can see you!"

And then he disappeared, lizard-like. Hansen swore, he knew there was no point going after Mikkel, he was gone as quickly as he had appeared. Hansen puffed on his pipe. The Detective's eyes could not follow that sudden swiftness. He had vanished without a trace. Only a whiff of macaque perfumed the air.

The Detective ran a hand through his hair, he could sense it had fallen flat, depressed in the moisture-ridden cave. He went automatically towards the entrance of the cave, towards the dim light of the sun submerged in rain clouds.

Of course, Mikkel Jørgensen had gone.

But Don Cindy had disappeared too, into the shades of time. Someone must have stolen her. The Detective put needle and thread together.

Mikkel... M...

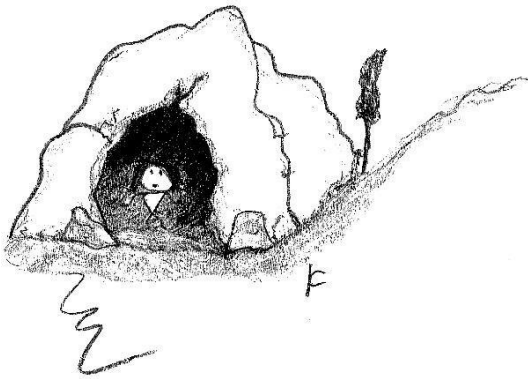
The famous Mikkel Jørgensen now seemed to be hiding alone in a cave. Could he be the mysterious writer?

Presumable not, as he had a bulletproof alibi from the media who had grieved and worshipped him since his untimely death in 2005.

Oh my god! Did this mean Mikkel was alive? Norway! The Detective's mind was running away from itself as it often did. He was imagining things, his eyes playing tricks with him in the dark of the cave. Yet, his nose was still tickling with the scent of macaque.

Detective oo Hansen paused, at first confused, then, as the earth's rotation centred his mind, he accelerated like a rocket, Usianboltish, and pursued the whiff of macaque. Down the road had its own reason. Quick, quicker, quicksand. The Detective stepped into a turd-bound brown. Sudden stop.

"Life is a bitch!" He mumbled. A pungent smell of shit chased his nose. Or was it his new perfume, Camel No. 5? Anyway, he was in a hurry. He had a yoga class to teach that afternoon.



Mikkel Jørgensen





## CHAPTER 5

The Detective flung open the yoga studio door. Murmurs in the tone of an out of control woodwind section revealed that the Detective was a bit late.

A leisure of ladies and men in rainbow-washed nylon fashion glanced up at the Detective, most returned quickly to their phones with nuanced availancholy.

Hansen's heart boogied. He was excited like a child. It was his first time teaching here. He usually rented a room in a suburban gym with lumpy carpets and even lumpier people.

This was a hip loft downtown with the crowd and the Lycra to match.

The Detective enjoyed yoga as it involved looking at himself in various positions. He enjoyed getting people into those positions even more.

He needed to calm down. While the texters vibrated along their mats, he ate a super-sexy fish sandwich. Then he changed unashamedly on the spot into his lightning-rod-bright yoga pants. Tight. A bunch of gentlewomen and mindful men stared at the contouring of his poking device. They smiled at each other like they'd just shared a secret.

To welcome the students, the Detective threw candy into the air. "Welcome! Today we'll do a few group exercises."

Among the students, he spotted the broccoli babes he had seen at the pizza place. At every turn, his work followed him. He approached them. For the case's sake he got the broccoli babes to lie down on their mats. They were afraid, he could tell from their

posture, it was all misaligned. When they were in plank pose, Hansen cross-examined their tofu-coloured faces. Scarcely perceptible, but understood by the Detective, their concave eyebrows in combination with the electron reduction of manganese in their complexion, revealed that they were innocent, at least in terms of their connection with the murderer. He also couldn't see the murderer targeting them, their bloodless complexions would surely lessen the murderous instinct.

"Enough for today," Hansen shouted. Then he jumped up, took his earnings via mobile pay, and bounced.

A little air rounded his hair alfresco. The Detective lit his pipe. Wads of smoke curled on the orange-red clouds in the sky. For a wink, the nicotine flash dizzied him. A moment, dangling like feet in water, forced a persistent thought upon him. Was *the* Mikkel Jørgensen alive? And was *he* the violent poet?

Too full were the waters of corrupt goldfish for the hunger of the piranha. Hansen's mood tipped. He put out the pipe and pushed his thoughts to the back of his brain to mingle with his conscience. He would figure it out. He always did.

## CHAPTER 6

The Detective arrived at his home, which hung on a hill. The apple tree Slimbo solemnly saluted the homecoming Hansen. One apple of high calibre grew upon him. Slimbo was fun but cheeky, and grew an apple every season—just one. He was an adolescent, planted in the early days of the Detective's marriage when their passion often resulted in grand household renovations and afternoons spent seeding in the garden. Now they just seemed to turn over the same old dirt and not much grew anymore, but Hansen was content. Slimbo was a reminder that the past still bore new fruit.

Hansen fumbled with the lock, finally hitting it in a rage and swinging the door open unexpectedly hard. The smell of his house hit him, the blood-like metallic of the nails that held together the rotting wood, the candles his wife lit in a feeble attempt to relax, and the old tobacco that had hid down crevices, terrified of being smoked. He was home.

Humbly, Hansen's house hosted lots of *how does one open this?* windows and only two rooms, but offered a swantastic view of the lake.

Don Cindy lived in the larger room, or rather *had* lived in there. Antelopes, especially untameable ones and Hansen knew, in reality, that she was never really tame, were known to roam. They never really liked to stay in one place for too long. Hansen knew she was getting cold hooves, that he should be grateful for the time that he had had with her. But Hansen missed her.

He paused in the kitchen. Utensils squatted in quantum chaos all around. Hansen was never very good at keeping on top of the housework and when he did clean his wife shouted at him, so everything just seemed to stay where he placed it. Knives balanced precariously on counter tops, waiting for arms to bump into them and for toes to pay the price. Condiments and jars lay open, caught with spoons still inside. Pots and pans layered the stove, the memories of dinners past swirled in stains and burnt-on effigies.

Despite the mess, the house still looked hygge. His wife had painted the walls a cosy brown, which encircled the walls and brought them closer. The thermic ambience of the house was caramel. The walls seemed to sweat Zen & Fairy's ice cream. He often took a spoonful when passing by. But not tonight, he would need his appetite.

Tonight for dinner: El-Niño-heated conversation, green tea and a landfill salad. His wife was a miserable cook and concerned for the environment. This often resulted in poorly crafted vegan recipes and sloppy tofu. The Detective was unsatisfied. His hungry mind made his thoughts turn to work. The poetic letter he had received lit the candles of his mind museum.

He had to work out this case. Essential research: poetry. The art of writing poems. Shakespeare and Milton were masters of English poetry. He searched the dictionary for answers, but the explanations seemed vague and without context. At his desk the Detective could usually channel his thoughts. But then a plague of flies, disgusted by the

left-over salad in the kitchen, conducted a festival in his room. Their comical dancing revealed they had been watching too many cartoons.

He gave up. Distracted, the Detective looked hungry like a shark and as fertile as a lobster. He took a cold shower to quash the anger and calm his libido.

Well-towelled, he played a few rounds of Super Mario Kart with his wife. It fretted him that she always chose Mario, for Mario was *his* character. But he won each round since he knew the shortcuts. This was impressive. Wig time! Hansen dressed up as an Italian coffee roaster and gesticulated passionately with a pair of moccasins in his hands. His wife was amused. She laughed merrily.

Later on, they listened to the nocturnal symphony of the remotely trilling and twerking owl Horsti. Horsti had often helped Hansen out when it came to creating a romantic atmosphere. A literal wingman! And the day vanished smoothly, like a cloud. Moments of peace and harmony in a world full of elbows, plastic swans and twerking owls.



The Detective's House with Apple Tree Slimbo

## CHAPTER 7

When Horsti grew silent and the sun began to stretch and yawn, the Detective had a dream...

*Rivers and streams and refugees. Water. Shapeless motion. A tectonic dance of ocean-parting power. Tumult. The ABCs of animals mingled on a beach. A uniform of zebras, a cacao of cows, a parcel of penguins, a school of jellyfish, a banana of gorillas, a douche of bags, a towel of wits. A scuffle. Sun and moon pulled against the ocean currents. A massive flood of tears. Silence. Then a party. Jazz. Cocktails. Milfshakes. Headlong dives from a boat's mast. A spontaneous eruption of joy. Carousing anthem. Collective dancing. Suddenly a new hole in the asteroid belt. Planet Pancake: flat, thin, sweet and round, fell from the sky, dropped to the earth, and covered up all the sorrows of the world.*

The dream ended abruptly. Somebody had rung Hansen's Tarzan doorbell. AAAHHHH AH AH AH AHHHHHHaaaaa! The Detective opened the door in his Pink Panther pyjamas. It was Pétur, with the Detective's antelope! He was carrying fancy brunch takeout and a beer to bring the tone down, as if the law of gravity didn't apply to his belly. "Morning Detective."

Instantly, Don Cindy jumped up and licked Hansen's nose, leaving a big gloop of saliva on his face. "Hey you! My friend! Where did you find her, Pétur?" Hansen asked, drying his face with his sleeve.

"Well, ahm I... woaaaaw! Shit!" Pétur had begun to walk past Hansen into the house but slipped on a banana peel. He grabbed hold of Hansen, tearing



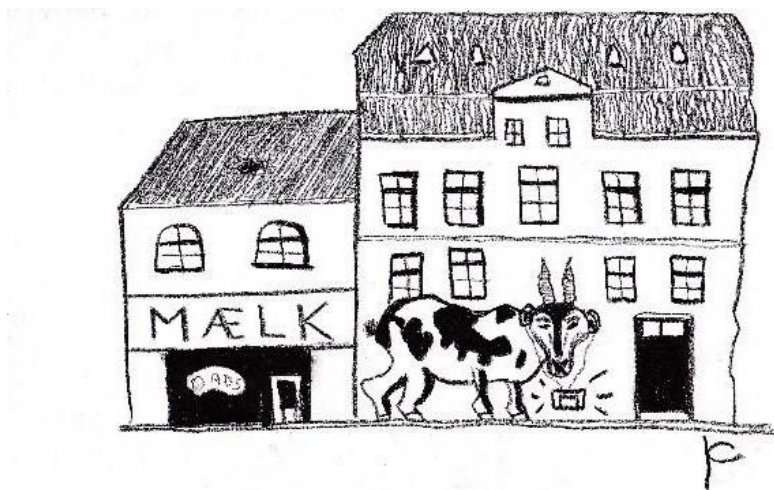
open his pyjama top and managing to keep his balance. (At night Hansen placed hundreds of banana peels around the house to protect his wife.) “Well... I went for a walk.” He paused awkwardly as Hansen glared down at his bare chest and missing buttons. “The weather was so sad. Totally unexpectedly, I stumbled upon Don Cindy at Mad’s milk bar, listening to music on her Walkman.”

“Typical Don Cindy,” the Detective trumpeted. He grabbed the paper bag from Pétur, overjoyed with the fried goods in his hands. He was glad to have Don Cindy back. He passed Pétur a crushed croquette, saving the bacon sandwich for himself.

“Are you on a fresh trace?” asked Pétur curiously, munching on the croquette.

“Evidence stands on shaky legs. But I’ll find this poetic pole dancer before the chestnuts drop, I’ll find him!”

Over Pétur’s face flashed a second-long smirk.



Don Cindy with her Walkman, overdosed on milk.



## CHAPTER 8

The Detective lounged in a café in the bustling square outside of his office. This case demanded a second breakfast, Hansen's stomach demanded that it be fried and drizzled in butter.

The Detective sat alone, shovelling the pancakes into his mouth before smiling at the sunglasses picking at avocado on toast. The lady behind the glasses ignored him. Hansen presumed the avocado was not yet ripe. He watched as pigeons deemed a donut delicious. They signalled with coos to the waiter to serve some more. But the waiter took off, heading back inside the restaurant to avoid a well-needed shower. The considerate clouds were sprinkling rain.

The Detective had seen this coming. He had finished his breakfast and leapt onto Don Cindy, tapping his credit card onto the waiter's held out card machine as he rode past.

He gained speed and rushed down the lanes in Nørrebro. From the left, a cycledelic cyclist overtook him in a frenzy, desperate to get to a spin class. Short cut! Hansen sped down a narrow side street. A marauding group of mothers filled up the alleyway with out of control buggies. The screaming pineapples inside were fighting for control of the steering. Don Cindy leapt over them without pausing. For a moment, the babies and their spiky little haircuts were silent as they watched Don Cindy and Hansen majestically leap out of harm's way. Once around the corner, Hansen heard the babies

return to bemoaning their overload of sensory stimulation.

Sudden stop.

The traffic light on Currywurstgade mocked him with a red head. A high-tuned performance car in vampire black roared aggressively in the parallel lane. A man with a diesel face and bacon arms suggested a race. The dude inspected the Detective's antelope. Brown flanks, white rump, and twenty-two-inch hooves. Fast, elegant, ready to kick ass.

The high-performance engine roared up three times, the turbo squealing. *Vroom! Vroom! Vroom!* Don Cindy pawed the ground with her hooves. *Badaboom! Badaboom! Badaboom!* A brief fart befriended the air and peeled the thin layer of confidence from the opponent's face.

Hansen grinned, flicking his sunglasses down and surveying the road ahead. The rain had stopped, leaving the tarmac sparkling in the sunlight. It sliced through a canyon of tall buildings. Hardly any traffic; just a group of can collectors roaming and singing on repeat:

*Three bohemians who can collect  
Sitting on a bench smoking cigarettes  
There comes the police  
What is this and that?  
Three bohemians who can collect*

Rage Against the Machine blared from the diesel dude's speakers, drowning out the can collectors' chant. Caffeine pills slid down his throat. The Detective played with his magic cube. He squinted

and struck a match, igniting his pipe. It was time to smoke him! The traffic light turned hello. The arc of suspense reached its crest. The diesel dude's armpits were soaking wet. He risked one last glance to the left. But oo Hansen was gone. He had sauntered off into the sun-stained light. He was already in the distance, hazy in the evaporating rain, like a mirage. There was no chance of catching them now. Once the diesel dude caught up, the Detective really would be a mirage and, the shock of defeat combined the caffeine pills he'd necked would lead to a very unsporting panic attack. No, the Detective was too busy to waste time on such silliness.

"No desire to hang with the douches. We've got to solve the case," he explained to Don Cindy. Although Don Cindy never spoke the Detective assumed she understood. She gave him that side-ways look that Hansen took as agreement.

He flung the magic cube at a school kid waiting at the bus stop. The kiddo caught it with a smirk, and waved as Don Cindy and the Detective galloped passed. Hansen was disappointed, he expected the kid to be overjoyed with the magic cube. He was in half a mind to demand it back, but some of the kids from the bus stop were acting as mimics, galloping alongside the Detective, and he could never deal with childish games.

He sped away, out of the city into the endless fields. The flatness was unearthly. Straddling Don Cindy Hansen could see the curve of the horizon. The sun moved. It was invisible to the eye.

There! A brimstone butterfly scouted for nectar. Nature was full of omens. Hansen believed in omens.

Hypnotised, he manoeuvred his antelope to pursue the butterfly. Don Cindy dropped a few welfare bombs with cinnamon scent onto the country track.

“It’s not fucking Christmas, Cindy,” the Detective shouted fretfully. Don Cindy raised her front legs slightly in a shrug.

The butterfly led them back into the city. Desirous of the bright lights and yearning for adventure, the little bug took them to the harbour, to the Mermaid Statue on the coast.

European tourists, too old to be here and too young to realise, stood marvelling at the statue. They were disguised in Asian costumes and posed in front of selfie-sticks. The pictures would, of course, be uploaded immediately, accompanied by gag-worthy hashtags.

Hansen hovered for a while around the statue, aware of the desperation of fans worldwide to get a selfie with him. He knew lots of them were just too shy to approach him. He lingered in the background of their pictures so that they could have a selfie with him without feeling awkward. He carried on with this until a man asked him to move, he obviously wasn’t aware of the Detective’s A-list celebrity status. Hansen left his fans to it, they were, presumably, distraught and concealing tears as the Detective rode away on Don Cindy.

Along the harbour, the Detective and his antelope utilised the rare appearance of the staring sun and queued up for ice cream. A sombre kid in an Iron Maiden shirt ordered a scoop of vanilla. Behind in the line stood a tall teen in a baseball cap, his face was drenched in freckles. The teen pitied the

blandness of the rock fan's ice cream taste and mocked him: "*BORING!*" The rock fan attempted to ignore the jeer, but the teen continued to mock him. Eventually he turned, he placed the ice cream down on a table in front of the Detective and launched himself in a whirl of greasy hair at the teenager.

Adults went into bitch mode. But the Detective could not hear them. He had already ridden away with the boring ice cream, and their whiny voices did not reach that far. Swift, swift like Ali's fist, Don Cindy was.

Don Cindy sweated like a cat, through her hooves. She splashed with every gallop, soaking Hansen with foul-smelling antelope foot sweat. The Detective fuelled her up with water at the nearby lake.

Here he drew euphoric whoops from a lark's ballad. The bird shifted from the fifth note of a scale to the third and back to the fifth, as if it were a popular musician like Tank Ocean.

After this impromptu concert, the Detective and Don Cindy were about to bounce when, to their surprise, Queen Marmalade II and Prince Sandwich appeared.

Hansen sat down on a bench next to them, in need of unreserved gentility.

The Queen was describing the taste of her coffee to the two-toasts-taller Prince Sandwich: "Oh darling! How lovely, how teddy-bearish the body, how pleasurable the aroma and beach-sandaly the aftertaste!"

"Splendid, marvellous," Prince Sandwich hissed, as if the bubble is of importance to a fish. Marmalade



II glanced at him like a startled deer, not used to him offering comment. Suddenly, Prince Sandwich turned to Hansen, who spluttered on his pipe, caught out in his attentive listening.

“Detective! Have you read the newspaper today?” Prince Sandwich asked with Gouda eyes.

“Not yet!” Hansen replied, while taking a large bite out of the air. He was shocked at being spoken to by the couple, especially Prince Sandwich. He was usually silent, Hansen had watched him on television, walking behind the Queen, not a word in sight. At formal dinners, where Hansen had first met the Queen and Prince, he was also tight lipped, words escaping only when he wished to request more camembert.

“Somebody died last night. They found a dead body in the car park of the supermarket at the Currywurstgade/Lantern corner. There has never been a crime in Copenhagen as mysterious as this one. In the newspaper they’re saying that it’s murder. But what was the motive? How could the murderer disappear without a trace? Why was the murder so brutal?”

The Queen took a sharp intake of breath at each of the Prince’s questions. Prince Sandwich seemed animated. They had both never known such a gruesome murder. The streets of the city had never had so much blood strewn across them.

“According to the leaked police report the investigators are puzzled by all the questions they cannot answer and have put a big bounty on the capture of the murderer,” Prince Sandwich reported

all at once, then breathed and became silent, his words seemed to have finally run out.

“The police may be clueless but *I*, for one, am devoted to solving this case.” The Detective assured his royal acquaintances with a furrowed brow. In the interim a thick cloud of seriousness had sabotaged the reach of the short-legged sun. “My ears profit from each of your words, Prince Sandwich, but now I have to work.”

Not awaiting a reply, Hansen hurried off, a murder scene was calling his name, and he never could resist their unusual charm. He found crime scenes were often like a certain ex-lover he had kept returning too, despite revealing the worst in human nature, Hansen found that there was something in their violent nature that rather appealed to him.

The supermarket that Prince Sandwich had revealed as the scene of the crime was out of town, cantering to the suburban sprawl of bored housewives with materialistic tendencies.

The front of the shop was the epitome of banality, Hansen wondered if he had come to the right place, but, as the Prince had mentioned, this *was* the supermarket on Currywurstgade/Lantern corner. People were still rushing out of the automatic doors with trolleys overflowing, filled with food to fill their equally overflowing bellies. Some had home decorations inside, curtains and little ornaments, as though tarding up the four brick walls that imprisoned them would help solve their problems. A pilates class was on the waste land opposite, a twerking team awaited him—#BubblebuttTakeOver.

They performed a feminist dance.

Hansen looked away from the round butts enthusiastically stretching out Lycra and headed to the car park at the back of the supermarket where an equally harrowing scene awaited him.

Instantly, Hansen spotted a puddle of blood. Fish scales surfaced at his stir. Next to it, a shopping trolley abandoned on its side. But its contents, all the frozen waffles and glittery wine or whatever people bought these days, had disappeared.

The police had been here and mutilated the evidence. The corpse was gone. But Hansen's doglike nose would soon sniff out any clues that the police had left.

Yes, they had overseen something. Amateurs! In the adjacent shrubs he found a plastic bag. A weapon?! Hansen put the plastic bag down and opened it. Inside was an unsanitary rainbow trout.

Instinctively, he gutted the trout in eleven steps. Of course! Behind the gills, there was another note. Stinking of fish guts and diluted in slime, but still readable. The Detective straightened out the paper, his hands shaking, making the scribbled handwriting jump and dance across the page.

*Dear Detective,*

*Fish follow fragrance,*

*Flowers embellish the air,*

*Cowards carry gaseous goods,*

*And friends fart with a statement.*

*May the force bewig you.*

*With unleashed tongue your secret friend,  
M.*

Hansen observed, Hansen deduced—Hansen knew the truth. Cancelling out the impossible and factoring in human madness, only one possible inference remained. The newspapers, in their sensationalistic reporting, had stumbled upon the truth, the woman had been murdered.

The victim was a middle-aged female, a mother, presumably sexy, and a former employee of a fish farm. The murderer must have choked her with the rainbow trout as was the etiquette these days.

However, according to the police report Hansen had read on the way over, the victim had died of an overdose of antibiotics and mercury. Stretching the tight corset of logic, it was obvious. As the trout's pale meat revealed, this was an overly contaminated farm fish. It smelled toxic. The victim's canine teeth had carved slashes along the side of the fish. The Detective was unimpressed. This information was easy to access and was meaningless. Had the woman merely snacked on one farm fish too many? It didn't seem likely. On the ground, he found a pair of fishnet stockings. He nodded understandingly.

The Detective lit his pipe. Through the comforting blanket of smoke, Hansen spotted a supermarket human approaching. He was barking, as these people often seemed to whenever Hansen was around. "Who are you? Where are you from?"

Watch out, Hansen! This is a trick question. Already straddling Don Cindy, he replied quite truthfully: "Fish".

The dude was baffled, obviously he never paid attention in biology class. Hansen sped off. No time to waste. He had a murder to solve!

## CHAPTER 9

Detective oo Hansen ironed the note with a wacker packer flatter. He had stolen the device momentarily from a nearby workman, who was currently chasing him and Don Cindy down the street. Hansen had bigger worries.

His hands were still shaking, not from nerves but adrenaline. This poem would lead him closer to catching the murderer. He examined the paper. It was in the same handwriting as the first letter but this one smelled fishier. The police were clueless about the murderer using the fish as a weapon, even when Hansen slapped them around the face with it. Only Hansen's capillary-fine intuition was able to tickle out such secrets. Most certainly the writer was a trout whisperer, and he seemed concerned for the environment. The fact that the victim had worked in a fish farm was not escaping Hansen. But why the hell did the writer want him to wear a wig? Was it possible that...?

No way! Hansen knew he was getting older, the dad-bod was definitely more pronounced of late, his mirror-image slightly more tarnished... but his hair was still luxuriously thick. He did *not* wear a wig. He didn't *need* to wear one. He was certain of it.

He had left the scene of the crime on the run from the supermarket worker, but he had got all he needed. The gravel in the car park would have cemented its position. The evidence would be solidified. Higher powers shielded the evil forces, but sooner or later, he would detain the murderer.

“Zwieback face!” he shouted impulsively, expecting the murderer to stop in the street and protest his lack of zwieback features. People turned their heads, but no one denied their biscuit-shaped faces. Disappointed, and ignoring the on-going tirade from the wacker packer operator, Hansen rode back to his office.

It was getting late, a queue was snaking around the back of the theatre and Hansen had to elbow his way into the office. He was annoyed at the disappointment visible in the huddled crowd when they realised he wasn’t an actor late for the performance. He shoved passed them and refused to give them his autograph.

Upstairs, he could hear the nervous buzz of the audience awaiting a show. Normally, Hansen enjoyed listening to the noises of the theatre, but now he covered his ears, trying to concentrate. On his desk lay a scattered jungle of papers and notes. One may have inferred that this was the work of the poet, that he was spamming the Detective with lyrical musings to overload Hansen. But these papers were leftovers from past cases. Emblems of long-distant triumphs. They were trophies, saved to prove Hansen’s worthiness. The truth was, he hadn’t solved a case for nearly a year.

Mowgli, Bagheera and Baloo. They all had nothing to do with it. He collapsed into his swizzly armchair, his head in his hands as he shoved the useless scraps of paper from his desk.

Suddenly three exotic girls in bamboo rocks burst in and boogied around. Paper steamers were flung

through the air. Monica entered with a tray. On it a large cake with sparklers noiselessly causing a commotion. Shepherd music played. Muscular midgets in topless tops served tropical shots. It was all very strange. "Is it...?"

"Yes, it is," Monica reaffirmed joyfully. "It is your birthday Detective."

Hansen had totally forgotten. Monica pirouetted and flipped and rose. She adhered apocalyptic amounts of lipstick to the Detective's nose. Hansen was afraid of looking like a clown. Monica called for the exotic girls, poured five glasses of champagne, and danced and flipped and rose a glass to Hansen.

For a while, she paused, completely exhausted, gathering her breath to make a toast, complaining about Hansen in a witty way, not realising it was insane to stick a knife in a toaster.

Then, after an instant, she scanned the room for Hansen. But he was gone. To the toilet. Such festivities scared the shit out of him.





## CHAPTER 10

Detective oo Hansen walked and walked and walked—he walked! This was because it helped him to order his thoughts.

A few reporters spotted him on José Anderson Vej. Daringly, they neared to take pictures. Hansen was cool. He was busy. He was cool busy to be stopped. He strode past the flashing light bulbs, ignoring the yells to strike a pose.

“Hey, Detective!”

Silence.

“Detective!”

No response, anything else would just encourage them.

“Your antelope seems to be missing patches of hair Detective, whilst your hair is looking fuller, do you wish to make a comment?”

Hansen stopped at the jeer and turned angrily towards them.

“You do realise most of your articles are read by people sitting on the toilet?” He smiled, watching the frown appear on the leaches’ faces. Then, without waiting for a response. He roundhouse-kicked all the reporters to complete destruction. It was ugly. Legs and arms adrift in a melange of tears and tissues. Strands of hair were irreparably broken. “Anyone got a problem?” the Detective shouted, grammar provokingly. No answer.

Blood rushed through his veins: Hakuna Matata. In a fraction of a second, the Detective sketched a photo of the murderer as he imagined him.

“Who knows this bizarre biscuit?” Swiftly, Hansen held the sketch up to the sunlight, the shadow obeyed submissively, displaying the picture onto the pavement. The ballad of wretched reporters shrugged. “Again! Who has seen this poetic sad sack here before?”

The battered reporters were frightened; Hansen acted outraged. One of them wanted to have a closer look at the sketch.

“Ahm, I might have seen this person before,” he said with his voice vibrating like Banjo fishing baits. Hansen was sure this was the wide-mouthed arrogance that had jeered him.

“Ha, there we go. This was a test. You flunked, boy,” he said.

As a punishment, he forced the slow-minded reporter to cut his lawn with nail scissors. The grass’s manicure was overdue! At least, that was what his annoying neighbour Oliver Anal had said in his letter to the municipality. Someone had to do it anyway. A task fit to instil human fidelity. It was the nuances that would teach him to respect and navigate the world.

Back at his office the Detective was finally alone. He investigated the trout. A pungent smell emanated. He mimed a Charlie Chaplin speech with it, opening and closing the gills to move its mouth. It was oddly empirical. A trout to be respected. The smallish chin and large nose resembling the English upper-classes. Hansen was glad he wore gloves. A Mikkel Jørgensen vinyl played in the background. Herd song.

The buttons of Hansen’s phone yielded under the pressure of his index finger. A number. He called the

police headquarters. "Hello? This is Ray from the fish restaurant, The Cooking Ray. Your wife ordered eight kilos of trout cake...!"

The Detective often made jokes to awaken people's affections. Few understood. The concierge transferred him to the wrong police officer multiple times. He was finally put through to police officer Dr Beetle: a man who often hid under logs or in vegetation, preferring camouflage during the day. Rarely was he at his desk. He worked alone and mostly at night. A match for the Detective. For many years, they had worked together. Dr Beetle was something of a celebrity in the police force having once found himself hanging from the edge of a cliff. Against the laws of gravity, he had lifted himself, together with his Harley Davidson, in a death-defying manoeuvre. Dr Beetle tended to only turn up to the office when he had scooped some evidence, usually it was a weapon of some kind, live and loaded and brandished around by Dr Beetle to the fear of any new police officers, who had to ask who this strange man was waving a machine gun or a hack saw around in the station.

"Moshi-Moshi, doctor." Hansen announced down the wire.

"When you call me doctor I know I am in trouble."

"You're paranoid. I need to send you over my sketch of the perpetrator, you'll need to enslave an intern. Someone has to plaster it all over social media. There is a murderer in town. Perhaps even a poetic masafaka! We need to capture the public's attention."

The Detective had no clue about social media and was glad that Beetle managed those matters for him.

“NO! NOT A POETIC M-A-S-A-F-A-K-A! What a nightmare!” (Evidently poets were the worst masafakas on the planet.) “I’m on it!”

“Let’s ketchup later!” Hansen said. The words poured slowly over his lips. And off he was, thinking: a man — a word; a woman—a dictionary. Or was it the other way round?



Phantom Picture

## CHAPTER 11

The Detective spotted two traffic bigots from the office window. They circle-jerked in Steve Urkel-shirts around the Detective's antelope, who was parked on the pavement. Indie anthems from the nineties blasted from her Walkman. *Smells Like Ante Spirit, The Only Antelope I Know* and, her favourite, *There She Gallops*.

The juvenile one of the pair just stood there, digging for food in the surprisingly deep pockets of his tracksuit bottoms. But the withered one was getting ready to rudely write a ticket. He was a big traffic bigot with yolophobic Jesus tattoos on his forearms. The Detective was right on time. He rushed down the stairs, kicked the entry door open and adjusted the position of his penis. He dressed to the left.

"You, pants down!" He shouted with deliberateness.

"Detective oo Hansen, is that your antelope? It cannot be parked here!"

He tapped the sign with a sly smile. The sign clearly said: *No antelopes here!* The Detective ejaculated his revolver.

"Watch your art or the calibre prospers! Do you have a licence? Let me see it!" But they did. They were straight. The Detective granted them two Icelandic bananas for redemption. Now, at least, the younger one seemed to understand the Detective. Even though Hansen rode a fast antelope, he only wanted to amuse. The traffic bigot remained ignorant of the Detective's charms and his pen hovered on the ticket

deliberately, drawing out the moment so he could relish it before he went to sleep at night. But then, a miracle on shaky legs appeared.

There! From the right approached the Taj Mahal of MILFs. The pretty breeze of her dress protected her from catching a cold. She wore high heels, but could not wear them, and walked like a dinosaur in marshland. This only briefly distracted the Detective. But the elder traffic bigot, Bolle, stared at the fantastic collage of fashion attached to her curvy body. Sexy, stiff. The pen in his right hand broke like the morality of a tipsy gypsy.

“Hey sexy, give us a smile,” he cat-called. The stunning MILF looked aroused, but shyly went ahead. In her mind, she moved her hips and arms rhythmically back and forth, as if she were miming the coitus pantomimically.

“You’re on your period, huh?” shouted Bolle, unapologetically.

Suddenly, she turned around and kissed him in front of his colleague. The traffic bigot was baffled as this line had never been successful before.

“Actually, I was already in love when he told me to smile, but I was too shy to flirt with him in front of the other man,” she admitted later to the HeteroExpress.

“Now we basically have sex, just all the time, I mean this really intense, rosy, I-know-you-and-you-know-me sex, round-the-clock,” said Bolle and he licked his moustache charmingly. Hansen had been observing everything and sketched, in a breath, a drawing of the lady’s dinosaur-like gait.



Stunning MILF in High Heels





## CHAPTER 12

During the night, a woman moonwalked through Killerwels Park. There was a small pond and willow trees hanging around, letting down their hair like Rapunzel. The water's skin trembled. A few potheads vegetated on benches. The woman wore an elaborate gown and had hairy, lady-like legs. Like the Detective, she smoked a pipe. As she walked underneath the tawny light of the lantern, her face even seemed to resemble the Detective's.

A whispering voice, scarcely audible, drowned the grinding sand under the lady's unusually heavy footsteps.

The woman continued walking along the side of the pond. She could see the whisperer on the other side. In the moonlight reflected on the water, she could surmise that it was a father talking to his son. The voices were angry, all at once they peaked, and then the father seemed to look around. The woman ducked down behind the sleeping shrubs, listening.

"This must stop boy, I cannot protect you anymore," the man was whispering again, whilst pissing into the pond. The light of the full moon broke at the tip of his helmet. "This isn't a joke, if you're caught..." The man stopped pissing in the same moment he turned silent. He shook the last flecks of piss from his skin. The pikes in the pond wondered why the heavy downpour had stopped almost as soon as it had begun and why the rain tasted so unusually fragrant. The man turned back to his son. "I mean, it's almost as if you find the whole thing hilarious!"

*"Hee-hee!"* the son was about to grunt, but before the high-pitched sound had reached his throat, the Detective popped out of the shrubs and ripped off his wig. The slim son whooshed past faster than Lucky Luke could whip out his gun. The Detective blinked, the whole thing had thrown him off, it was as though the boy had never existed at all. The Detective focused on the man who was still present, running a hand through two persistent hairs.

"Pétur!" the Detective exclaimed, surprised.

"Detective!"

Hansen could tell he had caught Pétur out as he leaned against a bench that was too far away, attempting to look casual but failing as he collapsed onto the park path.

"Are you also pondering poetry at the lake at night?" Pétur said, speaking too fast and staring at everything but the Detective.

"No. Out for an evening stroll." Hansen lied too, the wig still in his hands. "I thought I overheard you talking to someone."

"No, no, no! Pondering poetry, pondering poetry, pondering poetry."

"Sure." The Detective paused, waiting for Pétur to fill the silence but he ignored the unspoken command to speak. "Very well, it's late Pétur, and I have a lot of work ahead, there is a murderer on the loose you know. I must see that he is caught."

The Detective wandered off, down the pathway until the darkness swallowed him. Then he waited, watching Pétur who was illuminated beneath a streetlight. He was sat for a long time on the bench, rubbing his shiny head with a worried hand. He

seemed to be waiting for someone, but whoever it was refused to show themselves. It was only when the sun began to rise, spreading its orange roots across the earth, that Pétur gave up with a sigh and headed off into the rising sun.

The Detective went home with mixed feelings in his stomach, the echoes of Pétur's night time lavatory detour still ringing in his ears. He had heard it, foaming and bubbling as it mixed with the lake water. It was as if the sky was falling; calling dads, sons, and daughters, you better take care of your mamas.



## CHAPTER 13

A big woman, with lips like pølse<sup>4</sup> and short T-Rex arms that barely reached the keyboard, worked very hard not to do her job at the Information Desk in Central Station. She was an expert at looking busy whilst never raising a finger, sometimes she thought she should start a career in it, then realised it was already her day job.

She had managed to avoid the haggard man that had approached by typing random letters into her keyboard. Her colleague had been sacrificed instead. He listened with a strained face to a droning man, who was annoyed that autumn had come early to Copenhagen, it had ruined his trip. He wanted a refund. She grinned to herself as her colleague got sworn at and jabbed with a bony, old finger. It was true, autumn had come early to the city, she had never known such miserable weather. It seemed to be having an effect on the residents, like the clouds had cast a shadow over the city. Her thoughts were backed up when the angry man threw a punch at her colleague, knocking him out and spilling her soy latte. The Detective stepped over the fallen colleague and, ignoring the screams of the woman with the sausage lips, strolled along, snacking on a carrot. He was late to catch his train. Another murder had occurred like a good flirt—unexpectedly.

He had heard the whole story in a midnight phone call from Dr Beetle. The buzzing from his phone had shook the unsteady beams of the house

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<sup>4</sup> Pølse is a type of red, boiled pork sausage very common in Denmark.

and awoke both his wife and Don Cindy up into very bad moods, but Hansen was too preoccupied scribbling notes in the phone-side notebook to pay attention to their murmurings.

According to Dr Beetle a man had woken covered in blood that was not his own. He was a cattle farmer and had returned from his work in the fields prepared for an enjoyable night of romance with his soon-to-be wife. She had hinted at an evening spent in bed. Unfortunately, she was already in charge of the television control in the bedroom and the man had swiftly fallen asleep to the blinking dramatized flashes of a reality show.

While he slept, his fiancée had been brutally murdered by a stick of liquorice. She was a compliance manager at Sonmanto. This time, it had happened in Goteborg, Sweden. Dr Beetle, or more likely his newly acquired, tech-savvy intern, had hacked the Swedish Police, and, like a ravenous mosquito, recovered all the juicy details. Dr Beetle had informed the Detective of the case before leaking it on the internet in an attempt to get liquorice banned. Dr Beetle had always detested the stuff.

The tabloids were already reporting the story and coming to the same conclusion as Hansen. The murders were linked.

**POETIC MURDERER MURDERS AGAIN!  
YOUNG BRIDE-TO-BE STABBED WITH A  
STICK OF LIQUORICE IN GOTEBOG**

The evidence was growing thick like old men's earlobes. It was against the odds that two murders,

committed in such a short space of time and with various food-related weapons, were not related. The fact that the murderer had acted so quickly was in itself unusual. The poetic murderer was clearly nervous. He had to be quick, before Hansen put a stop to all his grotesque crimes.

The file from the Swedish Police said the liquorice stick was still palatable when they arrived at the murder scene. The evidence was fresh. Hansen could learn a lot from it.

The train to Goteborg was heaving with hurried commuters. Forced to stay still on a train they turned immediately to their phones, tapping aggressively as the train rumbled on. A kiddo, of carroty skin, pulled a plastic bag over his head and poked holes in it for a mouth and eyes. Lots of likes on Facebook were a good reward after nearly suffocating. If only he knew any of his friends in real life perhaps he wouldn't have such suicidal tendencies.

Outside, windmills were milling; green vegetation created a relaxed atmosphere; apple trees bore ripe fruits. No one looked up. The climate climaxed.

The sudden warmth lingered in the carriage. The air system on the train had spread the faecal breath from the toilet into the cabin, so that the passengers' faces turned into sourdough, a bad omen perhaps? Hansen twirled his beard. The movement of the train railed his thoughts straight.

Here, squeezed into a window seat next to a woman, with an array of devices blinking and beeping at her, Hansen felt he could concentrate, calmed by the stress emanating from the lady beside



him, he would be able to put the puzzle pieces together. The Detective sat, thought, then sat again. He ruminated on the vague information he had: the writer was genderless; no nationality; dressed up in women's garments; hair like a matted mammoth; no pets, but parents. The murderer had a weakness for poetry. He had killed two women. The first murder weapon was a rainbow trout and the second, a sharp stick of liquorice. And, presumably, he had an interest in smells.

One could turn it around like the square block in Tetris, enabling the solution to merge with multiple conclusions. There was only one thing the Detective was certain of: he had worked up an appetite. He bought liquorice snails from the restaurant in wagon three and went back to his seat.

Without a doubt, he needed to feel the relaxing gloopy grind that can only be achieved by munching liquorice snails.

Opposite the Detective sat a sweet Swede with bourbon skin and vanilla eyes, watching Hansen knitting gloves out of the liquorice snails.

"Can I have a few of your snails?" She asked with a musical voice.

"Can I wear your t-shirt?" Hansen replied confidently. Then they went to the toilet and wrapped up the deal. The Detective was superbly camouflaged in his new Star Wars t-shirt. Nobody would recognise him. With the odour from the toilet came a sudden realisation: human activity ranged from composing genius symphonies like Beethoven's 9th to taking a shit. And in the end, it did not matter how sophisticated somebody was—all humans always

came back to the point where they had to take a shit. Obscure trains of thought shoved curiosity-cargo onto Hansen's cherished path. He felt all the fine hairs on his back rising and shivers crawling up his neck like drunken lizards. What was happening to him?



## CHAPTER 14

The murder had been committed on a farm in a suburb north of Goteborg. The Detective walked, since it was only 17km from the central station—in good speed reachable within an hour, he thought.

The Detective was wrong. The terrain was different here in Sweden, rising and falling like the land couldn't make its mind up between heaven and hell. The roads were, to be truthful, expertly paved slabs that mingled with vast valleys and kicked forests out of their path, if Hansen had been able to stay on the road he would have reached the murder scene in no time, but huge conveyors had beeped Hansen off the highway. He lost himself in the undergrowth, staggering over tree roots and jumping at rustling leaves. The sun cringed at Hansen's clumsiness and disappeared in embarrassment, leaving only the moon, who judged but did nothing to help the lost Detective.

Two smouldering eyes suddenly illuminated the forest through the darkness. A squeaking vuvuzela sound startled the Detective. A rat had crapped under Hansen's boots. In Mach 3, he caught the rat and bit its head off. But he spat it out again. Unpalatable!

Hours later he arrived exhausted but happy. The pathway to the house had been stomped over by many cops in the preceding hours, flowers lay wilted and sad with boot marks across them, and the gate was swinging off its latch. This time they had really eliminated all evidence from the tracks. On top of this, no witnesses were in sight. Undeterred, the Detective trained his pull on the revolver. Hansen

needed something to take out his anger at the inept police department, his rage at the murderer's psychotic mind. There! A target. Mosquitos danced to Django Reinhardt. Bloody innocent, one of the mosquitos seemed, richly dressed in fur, as the Detective targeted it with fire-fond eyes. The swift-voyaging bullet cut off the mosquito's wings. It died on the spot. Yet the taste of revenge grew insipid.

The door of the ruinous house stood open and unguarded, despite the obvious need for security. The Detective went inside. The light was dim but still, in an instant, the Detective spotted it. A glow-worm relaxed on the ground. Hansen shook it, it stayed shining.

The area of the living room was 12m<sup>2</sup>. In the grate a coal fire was still warming the room, the embers glowing resiliently. The floor was paved badly with slate, the dirt appearing like weeds from underneath. A thread-bare rug was lounging in front of two tattered arm chairs. Under a scratched glass table he found a pair of criss-cross, fingerless gloves. He nodded understandingly.

In the back, sitting on a chair under an oil lamp, a parrot was recording voicemails with a tobacco-troubled voice. From a hole in the ceiling a snake dangled—no—it was a rope. It led him to the first floor. Arriving eyes found a virgin murder scene. There was absolutely nothing! Or, at least, there seemed to be absolutely nothing.

There was sure to be something for Detective oo Hansen. Microscopically, he spotted invisible scratches on the white walls that spelled out "*Liquorice Root*", written in the colour chameleon. As

Beetle had suggested. The Swedish police, at least, seemed to know what they were doing. But they were sure to have missed something.

Undoubtedly, Hansen already knew what they had overlooked. It was risky, but necessary: he stuck out his tongue, so far the tiny skin connecting it to his mouth almost ripped. With his tongue splayed, he licked the ink. Certainly, this was the majestic taste of liquorice. He gave it another lick, just for good luck. And another, just for the taste. Surely, the perpetrator had to be the poetic murderer, who else would leave their crime unravelling in ink. But there was no poem to be found. Hansen left, there was nothing else here.

Outside, the house looked on to a grazing pasture, cows munched on grass that was waving for help with every mouthful. Hansen was annoyed with himself, the clues had run dry, he felt like screaming at the dumb cattle who were clearly witnesses to the murder.

Hansen faxed alfresco, sending foolish messages over the fence that separated him from the farm's dairy pasture. The munch-mouthed cows looked stunned. The farmer did not, and chased him off into the night with his dung fork.

At a safe distance from the furious farmer, he felt the deep urge to uncork his emotions. With a bottle of *Øloquent*<sup>5</sup> he freshened his senses and his librarian brain was able to link the case to another mysterious murder from 1907 in London, where a poet had killed

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<sup>5</sup> *Øloquent* is the freshest beer; the only one that makes you sparkle with vitality. After the first sip the drinker speaks as she/he feels and appeals to the whole world, with wit and the language of the soul.

a banker and left a melodic poem on a one pound note. Hansen recalled two stanzas from his schooldays:

*Shrewd the banker  
Yet gaily inside  
Alone among his fellows  
Had travelled the sky  
Had journeyed the night  
In search of the golden barrel.*

*But he grew fat  
This lad turned sad  
And left by all his fellows  
Fond of the Pound  
Fell to the ground  
In search of the golden barrel.*

Hansen knew what had to be done. Swiftly, he took the next train back to Copenhagen. The beer in Sweden was too thin for professional investigations. Looking at his writing utensils sent a pang of hunger through him.

Later, at home, he drank another bottle of *Øloquent*. He was content. Shouts from a world far away gave him rest.

The Detective's thoughts started to transform. Absorbed in the present moment, he became pregnant with the notion of writing a poem himself.

## The Detective's first poem:

*Death of a Mosquito*

*With greed it sucks out treacherous drinks...  
Deeply stirs its heart from the buzzing sound.  
Alone with greed it sucks the treacherous drug,  
Won't desist, once tasted. Blood-bound.  
Never more enjoyed such utter attraction,  
Other gang members applaud. They whirl  
Briskly in invisible air-cages—no more, Mdeath!  
A bullet detaches the little wings, so neatly and ably.  
Life, in its fit of pleasure, owes a Hansen label.  
The tiny creature, unheeded, touches off,  
Death in its thousand drops like a waterfall.*





## CHAPTER 15

Writing the poem seemed to have relaxed Hansen. He awoke the next morning ready to solve the case. His wife cooked him a dull breakfast of porridge with chai seeds which he vomited back up helpfully for the birds living in Slimbo's branches. Then he galloped Don Cindy down to the library.

The black diamond building was imposing at this time of the morning, certainly it put students off studying until at least mid-afternoon, but Hansen liked Copenhagen's unusual library. It had a kind of superior air, Hansen liked that kind of arrogance in a building.

In the archive, Detective 00 Hansen searched for a file that revolved around liquorice root. He sipped on a cup filled with La Dolce Vita soup, trying to pacify his rejected stomach. But the soup was acidified like oceans and it stewed sourly. There were thousands of files piled up in the archive, but he could not find the one he required.

Hansen gave up and gathered any files with a reference to liquorice to study back at home. He left the library before crowds of hungover students arrived to sleep and microwave ramen.

His wife had made more porridge when he arrived back at home. Hansen escaped upstairs but Don Cindy licked it down by the bucket load.

Egg shells littered the way to the bathroom, leftovers from his wife's egg-cellent broccoli stew. Hansen cracked them under his boots in an enjoyable sort of way. He locked himself in, hiding from his wife's cooking.

Tired, he lit his pipe, resting his ass on a stack of toilet books, the genre seemed an additional cypher, hard-boiled fiction. Butterfly effect: on the cadence of typewriter-like sounds, a butterfly flapped its wings against a window. The sundry sun illuminated the toes of the Detective's boots. Hansen's thoughts tipped.

Surely there was a pattern in the murders? Something that betrayed the perpetrator unflinchingly. Tooth-brushingly, he moved and sat on the toilet, continuing his wife's uneven knitting. A woollen pullover that would be ready for winter and rotting in the stench of household faeces. It was not a romantic winter notion, but his wife insisted on knitting on the toilet, as it was the only spare moment she had for the hobby.

Hansen dug out the collection of papers he'd found in the archive and scattered them among his wife's collection of fashion magazines. He paused, in the sudden revelation that his family did bring a lot of activities to the bathroom. They were toilet hobbyists.

He stared at the papers, bland and uninviting against the lingering stare of a lounging lingerie model.

There must be something here, Hansen thought, flicking through the papers. There must be one minor detail he'd be ashamed to miss. His eyes slid again to the model on the magazine, a second glance revealed that she wasn't lounging at all, her arms and legs were stretched out at awkward angles to make her body shrink. Her high cheekbones look chiselled and almost masculine. The photoshop faded away to

reveal the growth of a moustache. Her hairline looked odd, as though her hair was thinning from all the tangle teasing and dye jobs. Hansen snapped and threw the magazine in the bin with such anguish that the wire-basket flipped over. He swore, dropping down to his knees to pick up sticky ear buds and strands of dental floss.

A ray of sunshine slid through the bathroom window and seized Hansen by the collar.

The returning sun shoved his arse out into the park. Lofty ladies were superimposed on the view. The MILF density escalated.

A group of groupies shouted: "Help us Detective! Catch the murderer!"

But he could not hear them. Too much work ahead. He walked down to the harbour. In the green fusion of the adjacent flora his legs yielded to gravity. He sat down on the colour-drunk grass. Here, in the arrogant shine of the midday sun, he pondered the content of the files.

But, as he sat and struggled, that hidden personality of his slowly gained the upper hand. Hansen drifted away, exploring, more deeply than ever, the shelves of his mind museum. Magically driven, his hand grabbed a pen. He was led by a tremendous force.

What was happening? Was this still him or had the poetic seed implanted itself? Was it growing like ivy, slowly attacking his mind like a weed? Rising and strangling the root of the tree, until finally it gained control? Hansen began to panic as he felt the poetic instinct spasm through his psyche. It even seemed he wanted to kill.

*Achoo! Achoo! Achoo!* Hansen's nose said hello to the pollen. He sneezed three more times to get his attention back. But there was nothing to be done. He was captivated by the poetic moment.

Hansen critically observed a collection of seagulls as they debuted their art exhibit by the Little Mermaid statue, dropping a bunch of kunst to the ground. When they had finished applying the final touches, Hansen judged their work to be technically poor but engulfed in passion.

The seagulls had inspired the Detective further. His creative impulse was becoming overwhelming. Another poem was put to paper. In a torrential downpour of ink, the Detective established the habit of writing about the here and now.

The Detective's second poem:

*A Dropping of Seagulls*

*There once was a dropping of seagulls  
Who wanted to see the world.  
By the Little Mermaid, it seemed hard—  
Their idle wings did hurt.*

*And then they called their attorney:  
'Jo Alfred, we call off the journey.'  
There once was a dropping of seagulls  
Who snap-shat but never did see stuff.*

## CHAPTER 16

Images before the inner eye. A minute of silence. Then a sudden exclamation: “Brie or Camembert?” asked Gerard Depardieu.

Hansen must have entered his office through the tilted window in the basement. His accountant, Gerard, glanced at him, unused to Hansen not accepting his offer of mid-morning cheese. Hansen was confused, like whiskey in orange juice, but smiled engagingly and wandered to his desk. Gerard was a middle-age man with a comb over and an impressive stomach. He came to the office once a month to work out Hansen’s finances. Although he seemed to do nothing but decide which cheese went best with which cracker, Hansen had not, as yet, been arrested for tax evasion, and he always received his Private Investigator discount, so he presumed Gerard was doing a good job.

The Detective tried to focus in the fog of ammonia that was currently fleeing from the refrigerated camembert.

A file was laid ceremonially on top of his desk, his desk lamp shining dramatically onto the manila folder. The title, *Liquorice Root*, had been typed on an old-fashioned typewriter. It had left the ‘t’ hanging off the end of the ‘o’, like the letters were celebrating the end of the word and the ‘t’ had become too drunk. The file had been left there by someone who had entered this office, but he had told no one he was looking for information on this particular root. He knew Monica was too busy filing her nails for such excursions.

He opened the file, expecting another poem, some grand lyrical confession. Instead, it was an academic paper on liquorice. He flicked through. It was tedious, the history of the root, the weed-like banality of liquorice in Europe. He placed his head in his hands, barely even glancing at the content anymore. He felt disappointment and anger flood his veins. The murderer was playing with the Detective, providing useless clues to consume Hansen's time. He was almost ready to shut the file, but then a page appeared, filled with red scribbles that underlined paragraphs. The Detective looked closer, they were hand drawn, the ink barely dry. Hansen could see where the highlighter had become excited, one sentence was underlined over and over, the marks almost breaking through to the next page.

*Liquorice root has been shown to be harmful in large quantities. The root can cause low-potassium levels, which in turn can lead to nausea, palpitations and abnormal psychological behaviour, including hallucinations and confusion.*

The Detective flipped through the pages urgently, his nose suddenly tensed, like a greyhound who has caught the scent of a rabbit. He scanned the file for anything else that was underlined, but came across only one other small mark. It was next to a reference to the song *Liquorice Root* by Mikkel Jørgensen, which was mentioned in passing. It wasn't much, but it was a start.

Perusing the file, a heightened sense for metre and music, and something obscurely quixotic, stirred in Hansen.

The Detective went for a walk. The weather blethered with a wet tongue. Rain. Coffee break on Wishingwellsgade. He stopped in an art café that was renowned for local virtuosos creating masterpieces in the chic interior. The café served, alongside disgustingly strong coffee, a range of artistic materials to expand the mind and push the limits of the imagination.

The Detective seated himself on Couch Craig. Danish design by Silvia Giacomazzabazziserabezza. While sitting down, he crafted a vase out of *papier-mâché* and chewed on his black coffee. The Detective's freshly-made, white vase matched the white walls in the café and reduced the chance of the barista immediately throwing Hansen's creation into the bin by 2%. It was not the done thing to stand out in the clean, straight lines of the permitted artistic environment. A poodle barked. Architect of emotions. Wanderlust. The itch for the remote took the Detective away.

Through seductive side streets he strolled and gazed and contemplated—and then strolled again, with immense vigour, which tickled the clouds and let the sun chuckle for a while. His intention was scarcely distinguishable. Lavenders, marguerites, roses and plastic palms hung from the balconies of fragrant houses and offered all kinds of nectar. A swarm of bees flew by, on pollination tour. Abrupt interception. A dimming shiver was following him. Impetuously, he turned around, stumbled into a busty blond and inadvertently touched her fancy buttons. Awkward silence. The urge to charm the situation into a memory.



A has-been man crystal-meth cold-turkeying tried to take advantage of the distracted couple by pinching Hansen's wallet. Sharp as a knife, Hansen snapped out of his starry-eyed gazing and slapped him with the blonde's Gucci handbag from Prada. The man's face flashed watermelon-red and two of his central teeth slipped away like seeds. A brutal mixture of cereal bar smacks and sausage slaps straight in the face invited the man to breakfast. It was lucky Hansen always carried food around for emergencies such as this. With the danger of food poisoning lingering queasily over the thief's head, he dashed away, throwing the wallet back to Hansen. He looked terrified, as if the Detective was the demented one.

Flamingo-still, Hansen posed on one leg for a while. The busty blond took pictures. Despite receiving her Gucci bag from Prada back from Hansen covered in meth addict blood, Hansen's show of strength had won her round. She could never resist a man who could take care of himself, especially one that carried around supplies of food in case of peckishness. She visualised their future together, marriage, then children, of course. She would, eventually, tell their grandchildren the romantic story of how they literally bumped into each other and, with a quick touch of her fancy buttons, how Hansen fell in love with her. Just as she was telling Hansen all of this, he suddenly stopped posing and hurried off.

He rushed down the street to pick up his pre-ordered 3D-printer at the post office for his next move. He didn't know yet what had to be done but he knew it would involve setting up a trap, because,

despite his various theories about the identity of the murderer, you're not automatically called Mac if your second name is Donald.



## CHAPTER 17

In the Frederiksberg Gardens, Detective 00 Hansen pondered puns amongst smartphone zombies and cycledelics. He moved erratically, like a de-webbed spider, with a sack full of stickers on his back in case he came across anything that needed decorating. The creative side of Hansen had really blossomed of late. Alongside a litter of kittens and a unicorn-ridden rainbow, the path appeared which led to Aimée's greenhouse complex.

The Detective was in need of miracle berries, which were only grown here, in Aimée's green houses. Only Aimée had the calming whispers which were necessary for them to ripen without spoiling, the berries were very sensitive and would only yield to the most expert grower. If anyone grew frustrated with their slow-growth they would immediately shrivel, and release a pungent odour, to teach the stern voiced individual a lesson.

He entered: "Merlot!? May I say hello!?" No answer. Inside, the splendid blend of love, peace and punk rock courted the Detective. Upcycled wooden barrels and crates tripped Hansen as he stumbled through the gossiping vines. The French-styled interior was surrounded by voyeuristic windows. Tiny figs on foxy trees were growing (and easy-going)—up for grabs and for the palate. Magic lichens embellished the glass façades in Mandelbrot patterns. An accompaniment of harmonies embalmed Hansen's soul. He was alone and Aimée's stash was for the taking. She had left a note: *Gone for a walk with Johnnie!*

Hansen took a melody of miracle berries from the golden pot in the centre of the greenhouse and began to push up the place. It needed it, the shabby chic look was over. Aimée would thank him. Presumably.

Flashy swordfish stickers now decorated the glass façades. A spontaneous eruption of joy took imaginary shape: a floor of dances, a hug of festivals. A shoot of butterflies, large and flashy blue, breakfasted on honeydew and drank milk from paradise. The swordfish stickers had conferred a currency on the Detective that he did not know how to spend. An instant release, like that of a vending machine, disconnected him from the case and was exchanged for a deep connection to the moment.

For the first time, an understanding of the full significance of what had happened placidly came to him. Hansen spotted a snail. On his way out he mimicked its pace for a while. Sometimes the Detective was a bit clownish, but at all times ready to be as productive as a clownfish. He left a short note. *Hey Aimée, you humble bee, left something for you to see, love times pi. 00.*<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Detective 00 Hansen, who was investigating the “Poetic Murderer” case, was last seen here. He altered his shape like an amoeba. It was past midnight.

**PART 2**  
**THE BROCCOLI REVOLUTION**



## CHAPTER 18

It was early morning in Copenhagen. The city at dawn looked ruffled in the foehn wind, like it was awakening after a night that it couldn't remember.

A man walked through the square, his hairdo had its own *raison d'être*. It looked like a car accident with no survivors. The man had also had a late night, he had spent it tossing and turning in an empty double bed. The hoots of the owl no longer romantic but sharp and cruel in the loneliness of the night. The wind was not helping his mood, it had blown his outfit around, creating creases, and whipped his hair all out of shape. But, with a few expert touches, the volume was back. He glanced at himself in the shaded window of an office block, before heading down an alleyway and through the back entrance to a theatre. He ignored the giggling actresses lingering in the hallway, adrenaline filled from an early morning dress rehearsal. He hurried past them, too busy for their flirtatious side-glances, and hammered on the button for the shaft elevator which led to his office.

The office was exactly as he had left it, with the exception of a flutter of photos that had been thrown angrily and splayed out on his desk. Who had put these pictures here?

They were quite odd to leave openly on an office desk. Hansen wondered if his assistant had seen them. Nude pictures of a far too familiar-looking man and two young talents on a beach. The Detective could see ancient European architecture mixed with modern hotel blocks in the background. Yachts were



moored up in the distance. Recognition caused a sickening feeling to grow in the Detective's stomach, it was Split, Croatia. The group was obviously out there for a good time, dressed in a bizarre mix of horserace hats and Pokéball bikinis, they were carrying an empty bottle of red and a Reflekta II camera that had been dropped carelessly into the white sand. The man in the photo posed generously like Don Pablo, wearing nothing but a jungle of hair.

The Detective's wife must have found the old pictures behind a bookshelf by coincidence. No wonder she had left him with a sorrowful air; a subdued mutter of: "once the seed is planted, it's too late...", and he could still see the dimmed light in which it had been said.

The Detective hadn't been seen for two weeks. He had holidayed in Iceland. But now he was back at his office, alone, nothing left but the summer.

Monica was gone too, on a beach holiday with her new boyfriend, Victor. He was a high-fashion model she had met in an exclusive super club downtown. Hansen knew she was using his name to get into such places, as he had mysteriously been added to the mailing list and received monthly invites to Supreme parties. Monica had met Victor at one of these parties, and the chemicals from the foam seemed to have glued them together ever since. Still, Hansen liked him, he was handsome and silent and mostly stood looking chic in the background of Monica's selfies. They would have a good time together on holiday, taking Instagram-worthy photos of beaches and bikinis. Hansen had expected to be in the background of those pictures, rubbing suntan

lotion alluringly into his beard hair. Monica used to always want Hansen in her selfies. But no invite to board the same flight came and Hansen was left in the office alone. Even his fans were no longer badgering him. Hansen had passed a group of girls outside the office eating breakfast on the go, they threw him gristle-filled smiles but, despite Hansen wearing his sexiest woollen socks and sandals, none of them had approached with an out-stretched selfie stick.

Hansen made himself a watery coffee, not able to face the ripened milk in the fridge and sat down to attempt to solve murder. Bad timing: a policeman in uniform and Birkenstock sandals stood with one foot in the door and a face ready to fuck everything up.

Unasked, he entered. Like a hippo in a porcelain shop the policeman slipped, grabbed at a pedestal, and knocked over the urn which held the ashes of the Detective's late mother. It shattered onto the ground. "No! *Maaama!*" Hansen cried in shock, a gigantic tear turned into an oversized lollipop and dropped, leaving a puddle on the uneven wooden floor, which was chilly no matter what. "Who invited this corny joke into my office?"

"I'm SO sorry!" Words of innocence erupted from the policeman. He held out a glittering envelope with a shaking hand. "I was asked to give you..." He mumbled something about the police president's birthday that Hansen refused to hear.

"Leave!" oo Hansen shouted, with eyes like the barrel of an AK 47. Furiously, he chucked the invader out onto the asphalt, which serrated his knees bloody. The envelope the policeman was holding escaped his fingers and landed in a pile of Don Cindy's

excrement. As if she was aware of the police officer's inconsiderate trespass, she dropped a few more bombs, decorating the glittery paper with the scent of cinnamon.

A rebel bird in the distance puked D-minor notes. All doubts were confirmed. The police force was the epitome of incompetence. If you want to do it right, you have to do it on your own—his father used to say this. Hansen knew it in his heart. The police force wasn't investigating the poetic murderer case, they were too busy planning some ridiculously pretentious party. He had to calm down, so he ignited his pipe with one of the nude pictures.

Musty tobacco smoke filled the air. Sticky layers of nicotine had tinted the walls tawny. He should not be smoking. The events had impoverished the Detective's ethical imperative. The words of his wife were still nestled in the chidden soul of the Detective. But Hansen had learnt that words were only part of the truth. Whatever that meant.

In the office kitchen he found an apple pie. A note from Monica: *I baked an apple pie for you. Love Monica.* She had definitely seen the photos before she had left on her romantic vacation. Hansen felt the world suddenly seemed more cohesive. A crash certainly, but onto chinchilla-soft ground. The Detective felt wunderstood. Half wondrous, half understood. He ate the pie.

The sun smacked through the kitchen window into his pie-pampered face. Wake up! It might have wanted to say. And, indeed, Hansen had wasted enough time roaming, caring carelessly about himself

while the city lay in peril. He put on his sandals and headed outside.

Sandalously-scandalous, he crossed the road without looking. A flustered beep sounded like an unexpected fart in a silent room. It was embarrassing Hansen thought to himself, as tyres screeched to a halt and a motorcycle swerved to avoid him, how impatient people were these days. His saddles played a beat along the pavement. Flip-flop-flat. He tip-toed alongside the fence of the neighbouring property. The neighbour had a narrow strip of parched grass in which nature seemed to blossom in the middle of the city. The neighbour seemed determined to fill it with as much countryside as possible and had bought ducks to keep in a small hutch. Three ducklings who Hansen had named Tik, Tok and Tak followed him along the fencing. He fetched a sucuk sausage from his pocket, he always kept at least one in there for emergencies, and tossed it into the neighbour's garden. The ducklings sniffed suspiciously at the lint-lined meat and turned their beak ups. Buffet, the bull terrier, however, bounded out of his kennel and breakfasted on the sausage, smacking belloquently.

A good deed a day: check!

Back to business. Hansen arrived home to an excellent idea. To his own surprise, it was actually the inept policeman with the poo-drenched invite that had sparked his imagination. Hansen began to plan the party of the year in The Big Squeeze. Everybody was invited: high society, low society, bro society, no society, animals, plants, cans, bottles, models, models with bottles...

The Detective 3D-printed some party utensils: pelican-masks, fish-scale confetti, and the Bornhyped Hiptionary<sup>7</sup>. He knew his 3D-printer would come in useful.

He had employed a host of servers to dole out indulgences, a DJ to spin the most obscure records and the press to make a scene.

Many people did not know this, but 98% of animals were unemployed. Thus, the Detective had engaged four hummingbirds to softly insert their slender bills into the corolla of a flower and drink the nectar. Spectacular! Perhaps the attraction of the night?

The Detective composed a flyer. He had scoured Instagram for the city's most beautiful girls and convinced them to appear on the advert, smiling out at the potential party-goer. Unfortunately, the girls would not actually be attending, they had plans involving Botox needles.

Hansen had advertised the party as the creative capital of Copenhagen for one night, a meeting of minds conversing in metaphors. The literary magazine Voundsenu took up the online advertisement. The flyers were plastered across the city. The party would most certainly attract the poetic murderer. The trap was set!

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<sup>7</sup> The origin of the Bornhyped Hiptionary is of special interest. Dr E. L. Bornhyped is a British psychologist and professor, whose writings have won him international fame. The Bornhyped Hiptionary aims to provide the hippest means of quickly learning the spelling, pronunciation, and meaning of over fifty thousand hip words in English.

## CHAPTER 19

Hansen was home for cleaning Sunday. He thought it was best to make an effort. His wife had finally returned, with a familiar frown and the silent treatment. The Detective tried using interpretive dance to communicate, she used scowls he couldn't translate.

The Detective pulled back a chair to reach the dust-rich spots under the table. It made a Chewbacca sound. Under the leg he found a fish bone.

"Here you are!" He grinned at his wife, convinced this would make amends. She frowned at him and left the room, he was sure this was an expression of upmost gratitude, she was obviously too overcome with happiness to respond.

He stored the bone in the fridge for bad times. He knew that his wife could conjure up a dish of delight. Fish bone quiche or something.

He carried on scrubbing, it was probably good that his wife had left him to it. She tended to disproportionately freak out when he tried to clean. Flyspecks had crash-landed on the windows. He scraped the infested mud off with wire wool.

An irritating whine filled the house, at first he looked up, expecting his wife, but then he realised his mobile was vibrating. The image on the caller-ID revealed a beetle quivering under a twig. Dr Beetle was calling.

"Hiiiiihhh, *cavalo!*" Hansen answered.

"Hi. Ciao, Detective. I've heard you're organising a party," Dr Beetle said, showing his interest bluntly.

“Ha. Listen to me, no police! The party is for business, not pleasure. Don’t spread the word.”

“*Argh!* Well you should at least visit the headquarters. It’s the president’s birthday.”

Yes, the Detective already knew about that. His eyes wandered, from his window the Detective observed a pedestrian—half sunglasses, half man—swaggering round the corner at a hey-look-my-life-is-cooler-than-yours pace, typing on his phone while walking along.

In a moment, he tripped over a rambling twig and fell to his knees, casually proposing marriage to a stranger. Another casualty of the drunk-twittering epidemic on the city’s streets. The man’s awkwardness revealed he was socially inept away from the virtual world.

Hansen gritted his teeth, he should go out and socialise. Soon he would become one of those twitterbots if he didn’t make an effort. It was concerning. Time to face the pain.

“I’ll be there in ten.” Hansen interrupted Dr Beetle who had been buzzing away happily to the Detective for the last five minutes about who knows what.

“Perfect, I’ll see you then. You won’t regret it, Hansen, who knows, you might even have some fun.”

Hansen scowled down the line to Dr Beetle before hanging up. The Detective hated these stag-stiff events. The police president Oscar-Claude Money breathed nothing but banknotes through his corrupted lungs. Claude was born on Mafia Island

and was an avid sailor of the Mafia Channel on holidays.

With a rake in his hands, and the appetite of Pac-Man, Hansen baked up a carrot cake of secret composition, and set off to kick-start the party on an epic scale.

On entering the police department, the Detective saw that the buffet table was overcrowded. No spot for his carrot cake to be presented soundly. Determined that his carrot cake be the peak of the buffet table, he brushed aside several tuna cans (poor dolphins!) and put his cake in the middle. He watched joyfully as the buffet humans: the superintendent, the little son, the crusty lady; that guerrilla army of arms wrestling for the last gold-coated goat burger turned, ravenous, like polar bears on the brink of starvation having suddenly spotted a seal, and lurched for Hansen's carrot cake.

Hansen smiled and attentively scanned the buffet for himself. This festivity was a good place to gather fine foods to fill the stomach with. He was just tucking into a miraculous meringue when Oscar-Claude Money approached. He had the prestige of a traffic jam and the charisma of cold cannelloni.

"oo, I got two questions for you. What are you doing here? And what's your poor opinion on this poetic murder case?" he asked randomly at this inopportune moment. Hansen's face was filled with whipped cream from the meringue. He licked it from his moustache and put down the plate. In the interim, he watched Oscar-Claude's face grow red, he did not like to be kept waiting. "What are you doing here,



Hansen?" he asked again, his round, ruby face resembling an 80s style kettle.

"Calm down, amigo, I've come here to congratulate you, but unfortunately I have no intention to ping-pong opinions."

"Ahm..." Oscar-Claude Money was about to reply, but the Detective was already on his way out. He knew Oscar-Claude didn't want him here, and it gave him a good excuse to leave.

Gala garments and the ongoing interval of leisure indicated it was time for him to work. The case was like his jealous wife. It needed his rapt attention. The party would become a huge success with the pound of butter—the best in the world—which he had mixed in with the carrot cake. He had done what was needed and off he was. The Detective was eager to retire the enigma of the case.



Oscar-Claude Money

**CHAPTER 20**

The mystery of the murderer's motive for the crime preyed on the Detective's mind. The grand secret commenced to crumble apple pie-ish over time. oo Hansen munched on a slice of carrot cake. Afterwards, keen to rid himself of the vicious heartburn that now plagued him, he coached the couch on how to appear in vogue by jumping up and down on it. The couch sighed under the weight of Hansen and retreated in annoyance. Hansen believed the result was excellent, the coach looked splendid.

Feeling in the mood for something comforting after this torturous display against his much-loved furniture, he drew a couple of puzzle pieces out of the treasure slit in the couch. Inevitably, piece overlapped with piece and mosaicked a picture of Mikkel Jørgensen on the tiled table, which sheltered the Detective's feet from crumbs of zwieback and his wife's sloppy cooking.

He was procrastinating again, he always did when he felt he'd reached a dead-end on a case. Again, he was distracted. It didn't matter. Sure as shit, he would figure it out. He always did.

After a while the butter kicked in from the carrot cake. (There is a small farmhouse that makes the best butter in the world and the secret ingredients of which it is made of remain undiscovered.) The butter sent Hansen's creativity wild.

Ideas teased.

To make some money on the side: Tippi Toppi Feet. A foot studio running down his 14m<sup>2</sup> attic. It could hold at least 10,000 workers. Garra Rufa fish

would gyrate in tanks and gobble the dead, orange skin from the feet of mature women.

To cover expenses, he would sublet the attic to a print shop. Synergy effect: customers could wait for their prints and meanwhile relax with a foot massage, enjoying the atmosphere. Indeed, this idea wasn't worth a kroner, just a fortune of fun.

The hungover moon was dimmed by the clouds, they were gathering to sniff out the illicit substance that had left the moon pale and withdrawn. This weighed heavy on Hansen's eyelids. Without thinking his plan about the fish shop through to the end, Hansen fell asleep, while Luigi from Super Mario Kart flickered on the crumbling screen. For now, it seemed the murderer's secret remained in the cave like a bat, concealed in the darkness of the night. But did it really?

## CHAPTER 21

Marching wellies disturbed the midday nap of the puddles on Clownwardsgade. But the puddles were raised in the midst of a storm and calmed quickly.

A Mercedes CLK driver, pretentious and unbelievably conformist, was vrooming aggressively, and shoved a welly-wearer off the street. He flashed past, oblivious to the two-fingered salute he was presented by the pedestrian. The Mercedes driver was now zooming through an area where his wage slips and dress sense were meaningless, and he knew it. Offended by the unusual lack of attention brought by revving his expensive car, the man shot off, soaking everyone within splashing distance. Unfortunately for the driver, most people still ignored him, they had better things to look at on market day on the Clownwardsgade.

Women with bushy hair and ponchos stood around arguing over the price of organic tofu, men, with top knots straining their skin blue, tasted home-made ale. The hazy smell of pot lingered merrily.

The economy was booming, vegan food and coffee shops selling out. On the corner a kioskhuman burped øloquently.

A bunch of kids sat in silence, communicating through emojis. They sighed, phones retreating to their pockets glumly, as batteries ran on empty. It was an indication that lunch was nearing.

Across the road the fair-trade butcher Happy Pig had just opened, offering roadkill and pigeon meat that had been culled ethically with a bow and arrow. The environment inside the butchers had gained

raved reviews for its menacing appeal. The butcher who ran it often waved a steak knife at anyone who dared approach and shot the customer's selected meat slab at them, with the very bow and arrow that had culled the meat.

Most reviewers took it as a clever take on positive carnivorism. A way to ensure that people only ate meat if they themselves would be happy to be hunted.

Actually, Hansen knew the butcher as a blood-hungry, violent football fan who had found his true calling. Hansen took his meat as a steakaway. He chomped on his newly bought steak sandwich, hurrying away from the Butcher. He was currently waving a meat cleaver erratically at two students, who were married to their smartphones.

It was as the Detective was licking the steak blood from his fingertips that he noticed a disturbance down the street. A group of upset farmers' flung eggs, which were far too cheap, at the staff entrance to the supermarket. But why? Side quest... the Detective approached to figure it all out.

"Detective." A farmer greeted him as Hansen reached the crowd, he looked flustered and was carrying a crate of large eggs in one hand and a scruffy looking chicken in the other. "Sorry about all this. It can't be helped, you see. The prices the sleaze-bags are offering... corporate career climbers, that's all they are. Expecting us decent farming folk to give them the eggs for nothing. Well... if that's what they want..."

The Detective watched as the farmer launched a well-aimed egg at the store window. A group of

employees inside shrieked as it exploded and cowered further back into the shop.

“I see...” The Detective paused delicately, “Farmer, when did you last see your hen, Henriette?”

“She took off in the morning to get groceries.” The farmer shrugged absentmindedly as he threw another egg.

Hansen knew Henriette was going to prostitute her eggs to all the other stores in the region and flood the market. Surplus supply had depressed the price. But Hansen was no fool, mentioning this betrayal would just enrage the farmer further and the supermarket workers would become omelettes before the day had ended.

“Why? Did you see her?” The farmer asked with a sandblasted voice, suddenly rounding on the Detective. He knew, or at least guessed at where the hen was plopping her eggs. The Detective shrugged, feigning nonchalance.

“I was merely enquiring, we were hoping to make a fish bone stew tonight, some eggs of yours might make it palatable.”

“Ah, right.” The farmer was clearly relieved. He obviously didn’t want to hear the truth. “Here, have these.” He shoved some of his riot eggs at the Detective, who pocketed them. He swiftly left as the protesters figured out how to work the automatic door, gaining entry to the supermarket and the corporate underlings cowering inside.

Hansen’s dumb phone had hiccups, delivering distraction from the case at hand. A quick look revealed messages that Hansen had neither the time nor the energy to respond to. He waited until the

automatic door was closing and threw the phone into the destruction occurring inside the supermarket. The mixture of eggs and farmers' walking boots would take care of the sim card without any worry.

Now that Hansen was distractionless he came up with a genius solution to the declining egg prices: a new generation of free range salad hens, which laid algae eggs that tasted of pesto. It was a budding niche market, perfect for the clientele of the Clownwardsgade. He went home to think, passing by the hair studio Pretty Punk, yet feeling pretty pink.

Meanwhile, across town in the LEGO store: "*Hee-hee-halløjsen* my name is Mikkel and I have come to play with the LEGO Pirate Ship." Mikkel spoke confusingly swiftly, without commas or full stops, and one could sense that his motives were loco—derailed trains of thought.

The saleswoman had to reach the top shelf. It was at least four metres high. He could peek underneath her skirt as she ascended the ladder.

"Hippo ass," inadvertently popped from his lean lips. The saleswoman felt cajoled and turned around.

But Mikkel was already playing with LEGO Lennard in the kiddo zone. Enthusiastically, he built and built

then smashed up his creation and jumped up, as if stung in the arse. He slid skilfully, elegantly, over the

Ryandunnrough carpet and was generally restless.

Then he played, and jumped up, and danced again,

accompanied by squeaky sounds like a pig being branded — he did whatever childishness demanded.

"*Hee-hee! Come-on! Yeah!*" he cheered. The saleswoman darted pre-gossip looks at him. Later,

she would tell her friends about the freak in the LEGO kiddo zone. Mikkel got along pretty jive with the other kiddos. He was a star amongst the young.

The saleswoman had no suspicion that he could be very dangerous, perhaps. Just young for his age, something wrong in the mind maybe, immature and rude, but not threatening. She only wanted glory and gossip away from the horrors of working in a toy store. Harmless frivolities in a space where she didn't have to watch her tongue or her language. She didn't realise that, perhaps, she'd be better off watching her neck.

It was lunch time for the Detective, time for taste-bud shopping.

Ebb tide in the Detective's fridge had washed up onto the shore of his consciousness a desire to visit the food market at Murderhallerne. Vital vegetables, fruits, cheeses, eggs and bull testicles.

A superabundance of freshness overwhelmed the eye. Misshapen carrots and winking potatoes an advertisement for organic.

A bunch of kiddos playing Pokémon went by, from their waddle it was clear that the vegetable market wasn't their regular haunt. They were tapping on their phones, oblivious to the stalls until one particularly rotund boy battled his way into an apple stall and was rolled down the hill by barrels of Granny Smith.

The Detective stepped over a rogue apple and strolled along with a hygge step. He had his favourite flashy herring silver socks from Araz, and, although completely covered by his jeans, they shone forth,



everyone around him seemed dazzled by the sparkle. He basked in their stares, adjusting his Christmas light-embezzled top hat. Hip was what he wore. Hip was what he was.

A swarm of groupies were after him. He suspected that they wanted some selfies. The idea pleased him. He enjoyed posing with fans, not so much the way people squished their sweaty faces against his in a rush of adrenaline, more admiring how good he looked compared to his fans in the front facing camera. When he had heard the word Instagram for the first time, he thought it was a new unit of weight.

The Detective looked into the girls' cameras, pulling a face and making his scars pronounced like a piece of blue cheese. Then, suddenly, he hid behind one of the stalls, he wasn't in the mood for selfies after all. His scars, which normally made him looked brave and manly, today just looked ugly and painful. His hair was annoying him, the front part greasy and untameable. He didn't feel himself. He knew it was the case of the poetic murder that was nudging his brain, sprouting over his thoughts and growing roots in his ears.

He shook his head, trying to shake the thoughts out, but they remained, they were just slightly dizzy. Behind the crates he could see mould growing, turning green like the unripe bananas. At least it shielded him from the camera lens. The fans were clicking in unison, scanning the area with facial recognition software. Luckily the Detective looked very like a pineapple and a stall vendor was suddenly overcome with a stampede for the spiky fruit.

Hansen remained crouched behind the stall, waiting until the girls vanished with their purchases. From there, he could see the stall the Pokémon player had knocked into. The saleswoman's outgoing apples were celebrating their freedom by fermenting, they were rolling around like drunks and bruising their fragile skins.

A fatigued band had lost faith in itself and played no more. Silence. A peculiar man with municipality-coloured skin neared the vegetable stall behind which the Detective had hid. He bent down, observing the Detective. Hansen ignored his gaze. Silence squared.

First one second went by. Then a second. Then a third. The watching man had not ceased. *Bam!* In a blitz, Hansen jumped up, and overpowered and handcuffed the peculiar man. He asked for his ID. *Name: Testos Teron. Profession: Voyeur.* The Detective removed the handcuffs from the keen observer and smacked him in the face at full speed.

"Let this be a lesson to you," he said, turning to leave. Hansen was used to groupies and fans following his every move. The trouble was, how to tell the fans from the people who wished to do Hansen harm. The Detective had made a lot of enemies in his line of work, from family of offenders who had been put behind bars, to the offenders themselves. A lot of them followed him, tailing Don Cindy on night-time gallops and parking up outside the house. It only concerned him if they thought he didn't notice them and that they could get away with it.

He watched the man run off clutching a swollen cheek, slowly growing like a shiny red apple. The Detective's stomach growled angrily. Hansen had been distracted.

In the absence of frenzy, the Detective collected a variety of cheeses, sausages and apples.

In an instant, he was reminded of his self-growing garden. He was always a little moved when he thought about how mature Slimbo had become. It wouldn't be long now until he brought home his first teenage crush; a juicy pear from El Paso or an oversized melon, and hid behind the shed to smoke menthol cigarettes.

The Detective remembered his own teenage years well, although specific moments were rather hazy. He had spent a lot of those misty-eyed days with Pétur, in his smoke-filled bedroom at Pétur's parents' house. They both used to lounge on the bed, the blood rushing to their heads as they lay upside-down, listening to the record player, smoking and talking about girls in their class at school. If they were lucky they'd be able to steal some of Pétur's parents' alcohol, topping the spirits back up with water. Their friendship had lasted through the years, bonded through shared addictions and a tendency towards overindulgence. This solid base of a friendship, however, seemed now to be falling apart. Hansen barely heard from Pétur anymore, and, when he did call, the Detective couldn't help but feel that he was hiding something from him.

Later, back at home, the Detective cooked up some sausages filled with apple and cheese, ate enough to

pacify his rumbling stomach, then stashed the rest away to use as Christmas bunting.

After dinner he strummed on his mandolin melancholically. He wore a giraffe costume so that he could think. All his inspiration came from the wonders of nature. His rhetoric was laced with the secrets of the forest; paths of confusion in an oasis of calm.



## CHAPTER 22

The Detective had worn the giraffe costume to bed and he awoke with a stiff neck. The sun was shining, Slimbo casting shadows through the windows, creating images on the walls with his branches.

Hansen had wedged the front door open, waiting for his wife to return. She only came home sporadically these days, bringing a frown and muttered insults.

Alerted by the lemon fresh smell, the Detective prepared to welcome her. As she stepped inside, the Detective popped around the corner with a horsehead mask on his head, hoping to scare her. But she barely started. Her tongue uncoiled into a different hypothesis. Full of foreboding, she darted into the living room. The hallway collapsed into dangerous silence...

Hansen removed the mask, dropping it to the floor. He was consumed by his wife's absence. Her presence only confirmed by distant footsteps. He paused in the silence until suddenly a ringing screeched through the hallway. Hansen picked up the phone.

"Carrotsuckingmaggotmindpoeticmasafaka, sh-sh-sh-sh-shit," someone stuttered, like a bicycle rolling downstairs, into the earpiece.

The Detective hung up instantly. "Saboteurs," he shouted, "all cattle and no calf."

Pale and without purpose, Hansen looked like a ghost trapped in time. He suddenly heard a furious gasp and his wife pushed past him roughly, muttering about scratched windows. It took Hansen

a while to work out why she was annoyed, but then he remembered the cleaning and the wire wool. By the time he had worked it out, she had left him once again.

First the nude pictures and now the scratched windows. It was all too much for her! But the Detective was sure that good times would return, his wife surely could not stay away for long, missing out on Mario Kart and cooking those dreadful meals must have been taking a toll on her. She would be back, no women could surely resist his charms, his fabulous hair and his various costumes.

His present feelings gave him a moment's peace, and yet he knew that he could not live unless the question of whether or not she would remain his wife was decided.

On top of all of it was the tragedy of the police president's death. Shit! Dr Beetle had called him earlier and revealed the tragic demise of his superior.

Hansen had never liked the man, and the president never pretended to like Hansen much either. But he had never wished him death. The circumstances were, admittedly, suspicious.

Dangerously high levels of saturated fat from the carrot cake (baked with the best butter in the world) had caused vast amounts of gas in the lactose intolerant president. He had tried to hold in the noxious gas through the entirety of the party, which resulted in a finale of farts and unfortunately rocketed the president through the ceilings of seven floors.

The newspaper showed pictures of his pancake-like body flattened on the ground in the entrance hall

of the police headquarters. To the Detective's relief, the coroner had confirmed the death as a tragic accident, a result of the president's reservations about public displays of gas and his unfortunately large appetite. This hadn't stopped a large proportion of police officers considering Hansen responsible for the death of one of their own and ultimately refusing to associate with the Detective for a moment longer.

Hansen's thoughts mixed up like *kabelsalat*.<sup>8</sup> Since his wife had left and the police officers had unfriended him, his intergalactic confidence had swan-dived for few seconds. A fish finger sandwich to calm him did not help. He checked online and his worse fears were confirmed; he had materialised as an advert on Yelp. Nothing but a day of intense work could lift him up.

He went outside to pet his antelope.

Don Cindy solemnly burped the oo Hansen anthem. Carbonara odour emanated—she often dumpster-dived in the garbage behind the Italian restaurant, Akropolis.

A convey of vans suddenly swerved to a stop along the pavement outside. The Detective was pleased to see some female fans clambering out. Oddly, they all had the same type of shirt on, in identical colours and shapes, all generously bulging. They were asking for autographs.

“Sign here, please,” the boldest of them requested, pointing to the paper with her pencil.

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<sup>8</sup> Kabelsalat means “salad of cables” in Norway and Germany: a saying for when a lot of cables get tangled up and resemble a salad.



What the Detective did not know was that he had purchased twenty IDEA washing machines.

The Detective galloped to the cinema on his antelope. They were showing the Mikkel Jørgensen documentary, *Plutowalking: The Real Story of Mikkel Jørgensen*. A review of his flamboyant career. Born in Jutland, Denmark, Mikkel Jørgensen had become the lead singer of his family's popular Herringtown group: The Jørgensen Jive. He went on to build a solo career of astonishing success, delivering a series of No.1 hit albums: *Chiller*, *Mock the Call*, and *Liquorice Root*.

His style went against the norms of pop and tackled serious questions about the state of the world. However, despite his success, The King of Cod (he had once won a cod eating competition) was hounded by the press who detailed his supposed promiscuity. The coverage was not helped by his lyrics which detailed sexual intercourse with hundreds of women. He dismissed the lyrics as creative license and fought the allegations against him successfully.

Unfortunately, he died right before his comeback album tour in 2005—*The Broccoli Revolution*. The circumstances were suspiciously vague and stories of sightings had occasionally popped up in tabloids. Millions of fans could not believe that he was actually dead. Would he ever come back?

The movie ended with a fade to black and an advertisement for *The Broccoli Revolution* album.

The bits of information mixed together in the Detective's high-tuned blender of a mind. He

followed the Mikkel Jørgensen fans streaming out of the theatre. They were still tearfully lamenting his death and clutching t-shirts with his face on. The Detective nodded understandingly.

Later on, he sat picnicker-like on the green carpet of Oyster Park and nibbled through the vegetation of his sandwich. Passing people studied his unremitting but vogue nose hair. It was gigantic.

Hansen assumed a competitive countenance as several thoughts in his mind battled for supremacy. Another idea earned his attention. A longing to watch his handball team had grabbed him and wouldn't let go. He knew it was the world handball championships this weekend and Detective oo Hansen knew he'd be able to get a ticket.



## CHAPTER 23

The Denmark vs. France handball match was in progress, full tilt. The audience was vigorous and nervous. Grown men clutched plastic cups with tearful, beer-infused, eyes. They chanted violent insults and sung passionate, inspiring songs.

There were many men and a few MILFs. It was past half-time. The teams were dead even. Denmark in attack. Long arms and legs were thrust into the French defence. The ball invisible for seconds. Per Slutspurt was wriggling himself free from the tentacles of the French octopus defence and caught a curveball. But a French defender stopped him illegally. Penalty. Mads Fartcontrol netted safely. The air grew thinner for the French team.

The Denmark supporters were roaring in triumph. The Detective was playing along with spectacular whoops and cheers. But despite his love of the game, the Detective wasn't really following it. The Detective was at work. Anything else would be ridiculous. He knew the murderer would turn up, surely no one sane would miss the world handball championship.

Anticipating that he would need them, he had brought binoculars. Carefully, he scanned the audience for an indication: who was snacking on liquorice sticks? Nobody! Instead, a familiar odour conquered his nose—zwieback. It was unusual, the smell of zweieback at a handball game, it wasn't a traditional snack at sporting events. The Detective knew he must follow the funny smell to find its source. Even if it just led to an entrepreneurial

zwieback seller, at least, if nothing else, he could have a taste of the sweet biscuit. Or perhaps it was simply a fellow wearer of the delectable perfume *Zwieback for Men?*

The smell lingered then vanished in front of his noise. He searched for it, sniffing in desperation as people around him moved away in fear of being smelt.

Doubts absorbed him. Perhaps he had overlooked something? With lush legs, he stepped through the lines of fans. All at once the odour became stronger. A lady with skin robbed of colour, several bags of snacks and a Chihuahua in her arms was the source of the zweieback smell.

Tango-twisting and salsa-stepping, he approached. From behind he softly smelled her neck, the smell of zweieback lingered. He sniffed again, loudly and the lady turned bitchy.

“Hey! What are you doing? Are you sniffing my Chihuahua?” She exclaimed vehemently.

To assuage her, he whipped out the picture he had drawn of the murderer and asked: “Have you seen this person?”

She started towards him, Chihuahua raised, but before she could open her thin-lipped mouth, Pétur fortunately turned up with a pack of hot dogs.

“Ah, Detective—hot dog?”

“Is it laced with butter?” Hansen replied suspiciously. He had presumed Pétur blamed the Detective for the police president’s death along with the rest of the force. Perhaps Pétur was hoping Hansen was himself gaseous and he could return the

favour, but he was out of luck, the Detective had a famously strong stomach.

Pétur smiled ambiguously like an emoji. The Detective hyena'd the weakest of the hot dogs from the pack. Perhaps he could snatch another, for one was never enough. He was glad of Pétur's interruption regardless of his intentions. His waving of hot dogs had caused the woman to flee, in fear of the brine he was flinging ruining her zwieback scent. The Detective was very happy that the lady had not hit him with her Chihuahua, or worse. At least the Chihuahua had not been urged to kill. The Detective hated bites, he had once booted a duck for snacking suspiciously close to his ankles.

The zwieback scent was a false lead. Hansen needed a revolution, a change of outlook, in order to solve this case. The Detective changed into a Che Guevara shirt and improved his karma by gifting wacky masks to the popcorn sellers. The match was becoming a carnival of emotion. Plastic beer cups were flung through the air and many fans grew hairs on their tongues. oo Hansen already knew who would win, so he planned to leave the stadium ahead of time to preserve his incognito. Victory for Denmark. Stage victory for the Detective.

The hot dog Pétur was currently sucking like a lollipop gave Hansen the clue for what he had to do next. The Detective had to handle this complex situation with simple imagination. Light shone on the enigma of the case through the stadium's oculus. The evidence grew together like a monobrow.



## CHAPTER 24

The trip to Asia was elephantastic. Thailand, Singapore, Vietnam, and Cambodia. Hansen climbed active volcanoes in Indonesia. He witnessed the world's largest lizard, the Komodo dragon, from over his shoulder while he ran away. He fought through the tangled mangrove swamps and walked alongside wild elephants, which you should not mock because they would remember it forever.

And the Detective lounged in his bath tub for the whole trip, for the Detective travelled in his fantasy. With eyes wide shut, he focused microscopically on the destinations of his desire: Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Gálapagos Islands and Belgium, as these were only a few examples of places he had never really visited. In his mind he saw them clearly and off he flew, never leaving his home. In his imagination, he painted his travels, layer over layer, until his fancy was in full bloom.

He had learned the technique from a massage therapist he had met in Paris, Nikola Tesla, who once taught the Detective secret tricks. A rationalist who practiced paganism, Nikola was quick-witted at teaching the mind to conquer the body and often convinced men to part with their money without lifting a finger.

"Imagination is a most dangerous beast," she used to tell Hansen before she cracked his back into submission, "it can be tamed though, and used to your advantage."

Returning from his international flight in a bathrobe. oo Hansen dressed and went to the kiosk on



Cooldogsgade to spend some love letters on candy and a scrunchie. It wasn't for nothing that people called him Hipson<sup>9</sup>. By the time the seller had read the love notes, Hansen had already eaten the candy and whipped his hair into the fashionable scrunchie with a jaunty quiff.

During lunch break at Blowjob Square, Hansen dreamed of his wife. She had prepared his favourite dinner: La Dolce Vita soup. The cutlery was neatly arranged and she had even put on her best Sunday outfit, although the weather was lousy. Flowery fragrances freshened the body of the room foxy. She was wiggling around, touching Hansen's shoulder flirtatiously. The sparkle in her eyes signalled that she really wanted it. But recently the Detective had been behaving oddly. More often than not, he walked away from her desire for love.

He awoke, head first in his carrot soup. Waiters were watching him, their grins revealing he looked fabulous with an orange-tinted moustache. He began to walk home, still concerned about the strange lack of libido that had come over him. Further puzzling him was the fact that he now peed entirely straddle-legged, whereas before he had sat on the toilet. Instead of coming to his wife when she returned now and then, in the cosy bed, he slept in

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<sup>9</sup> Hipson is the name for an individual of the hipson movement. Unlike mainstream penny-pincher, hipsons give generous tips, are sisters/sons of fun, and live on wit. Whenever possible, they splash their cash to protest against Savemania and facilitate free-flowing money.

the garden, standing next to the acacia. Something was wrong.

He stopped at a bar and ordered beer shots to drown out the worrying feeling that he was losing his mind. The last thing he remembered was ordering a bag of peanuts for the elephant in a dress next to him.

*The Detective awoke. He was alone in his bedroom. The sun was streaming in sharply, the rays turning rainbow-coloured and bouncing about like ping-pong balls. Hansen stretched and got out of bed, heading to the bathroom to check whether his hairdo conformed to Euclidean space. The mirror gaped at him obscurely and his worst fear became true: he had become a giraffe. Great!*

*Now he would have to move to the zoo. But this also meant he would have several assistants. Monica would be able to remain on holiday with Victor and start a new life as an Instagram sensation. Victor would take photos of her as she held on to his hand, pulling him to a new destination in front of the lens. Hansen, meanwhile, would have someone who cleaned his enclosure, someone picking up the welfare bombs, a personal chef, and veterinarians administering all kinds of drugs. Altogether—not too bad.*

The Detective jolted awake, writhing and weltering on the bench at Blowjob Square, covered in sweat. A few can collectors had gathered around him. He felt consciousness slip again as his hidden feelings gained control over the dream.

*A bitten apple dropped from the bedside cabinet onto his iMagination device which was lying on the floor, turning it on. Chi Pie flashed onto the screen. Hansen could not believe his luck. His wife had returned! He lifted her up,*

*twirled her around, and kissed her wildly. That night it was all as it had been before, when their love was fresh and fancy. They stayed up the whole night, shared dreams, drank tea together, kissed, kissed, and kissed, and watched the nocturnal performance of the twerking owl, Horsti.*

Hygge times. But only a dream. As consciousness took over again, the group of can collectors applauded. Confused and suspiciously out of breath, the Detective negated his presence and walked away.

## CHAPTER 25

Hansen's imagination was of tremendous exploit, like magic leaping out of the void; with unsteadfast footing and kind of blue-looking. With lust once again governing his mind, giggles gained supply and magnified the flame of the chi in the I.

oo Hansen felt groovy while perusing his notes, queuing up in the supermarket. Profoundly influenced by the case, music and metre reprogrammed the Detective's brain.

That night was the Detective's eagerly-awaited party of the year, Hansen had recently come up with the idea of advertising it as a belated celebration of Mikkel Jørgensen's album release: *The Broccoli Revolution!* So far, so weird. And yet, so clear.

The party was the Detective's secret plan to draw the murderer out of his cave. Wait! Or was the murderer perhaps female? There was no way to tell, Pétur had described the writer of the poems as genderless but in women's apparel.

But there was no time for speculation. The Detective approached the coin-collecting individual at the cash desk. "I'd like three sticks of liquorice!"

The liquorice sticks were kept with the cigarettes, restricted to over eighteens due to their use as a weapon in the recent murder. Hansen didn't see what difference it made, he couldn't see a child being the murderer. They'd be more likely just eat the liquorice. Besides he'd never met a child as eloquent as the poetic murderer, most children these days did not communicate beyond emojis.

“Here.” The seller discretely slid the sticks in Hansen’s direction before ringing up The Detective’s other purchases: two bottles of rice liquor, a scratchie and Price Fisher’s Alphabet Blocks which wobbled along on the conveyor belt.

Hansen tossed a few love letters onto the counter and left. The love letter currency was booming in Hansen’s world.

Confined to walking, he dragged himself around. Don Cindy was at the vet. Someone had winged her at night. It looked pretty bad. Hansen had found her curled up under Slimbo, who was stroking her fur with his branches sympathetically. The wound had streaked her brown hair red, turning the grass around her sad and droopy. Hansen had watched sadly, Slimbo’s branch patting his arm, as the vets hurried her away.

His suspicions rose to a pin-prick, like the hairs on the back of his neck. Did the poetic murderer know he was on his tail? Had he done it as a warning, a message to the Detective to back off?

A bio-fuel bus was farting down the road. The bicycle traffic resembled the movement of an earthworm, contracting and expanding at each traffic light. Along the lake’s gravel path, a rodeo of runners religiously cultivated their fitness. They barely fitted onto the path, so that at any moment a rogue elbow could knock one of them into the lake.

The serious ensemble of passing faces revealed it was lunch time. The Detective ate a duck sandwich at Murderhallerne, while making a duck face. Tooth pain—his grinders hurt. The pulled meat had worked its way down to the root.

Back on the footpath, the sun took on the superlative form, dominating the sky. From the aerial perspective of walking, the Detective felt high and identified a capital T on a manhole: undeniable indication that it was being used by the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.

No doubt that time was slipping away. Useful hints distracted the Detective. Sitting on a bench, he scratched out the scratchable area on his scratchie. *BAM!* Jackpot—he had won one million kroner!

Hansen got up and flagged down a taxi which drove him to the album release party. The Detective paid the taxi driver with the scratchie. A fortune passed is a fortune doubled.

Specially for the event he had booked DJ StrangeCrab. Many people had signed up for the party on Facebook, but that meant nothing.

At 10pm, the party guests started coughing. A Rastafarian gang had prepared the venue. In front of the limbo entrance, guests began to stack up in their hundreds. The Detective was a skilful limbo dancer. Fearlessly, he thrust his knees underneath the limbo bar and stole into the club, sweating. A round of applause.

The Formula One of lesbians on the dancefloor were petting. Queer dudes with anchor tattoos on their thighs and pelican-masks on their heads made up a world of poses. Tan ladies, tightly parcelled in sausage casing, drank *Øloquent* in chic doses. A plane did a fly-by over the terrace and passengers took photos, while gorillas in security costumes stood and watched, slightly baffled.

Musical miracles of fresh pleasure blossomed in the soundscape; poetry and pottery had usurped the role of decoration. The Bornhyped Hiptionary was pedestaled on a table on its own, offering distinct words for social segregation.

The Detective mingled with the crowd. With ninja-like hush, he neared his guests, groping words with his ear lobes. Mostly it was gibberish—spoken turds. People groped for him, his was in demand now that he was the host of this fabulous gathering. He nodded and smiled as women in ball gowns and pearls let out howls of “Oh darling, what a delightful occasion!” They clutched glasses of champagne like walking sticks and fluffed up their hair with every word. The Detective made his excuses and continued to meander, he headed down to the dancefloor where the crowd was less thorough-bred.

DJ StrangeCrab scratched the vinyl with a frozen shrimp; he played the old hits of Shrimp Bizkit. Girls in luminous fishnets and home-dyed hair danced jerkily, encouraging the Detective to join them. He busted some moves: the standard flamingo pose, the more adventurous whale swim and the crazy penguin. Hansen could barely believe he had pulled it all off, he knew he looked spectacular as the girls’ eyes were wide and staring, their faces blown away by his dancing talent. Distracted, the Detective completely forgot about the case, until suddenly an odd silhouette whooshed by. The Detective spotted it and followed its course. Mysteriously swift for one of the ravers, the shadow disappeared into the bathroom. Why? The shadow had moved awfully

quickly for an innocent trip to the bathroom, unless, of course, it was an urgent need.

Hansen followed to find out. Armed with a stick of liquorice, he tapped each cubicle, listening for a change in the sound from just plops and strangled murmurs of “occupied”.

Hansen continued to tap, knowing the murder would sense the liquorice, would know the hollow sound of the root being bashed against the door. Hansen came to the second to last cubicle and was just about to tap when a *hee-hee!* flew through the air. The squeaking exclamation revealed that, without a doubt, Mikkel Jørgensen was in there.

A trap perhaps? It seemed very convenient, he had almost led the Detective to him. Hansen paused, then punched the door open.

“Beg your pardon, knocked too hard.” He entered the cubicle. A scarcely discernible nervous smile slowly came into the centre of the visual field! In the cubicle sat Pétur, drinking a beer and playing a voicemail out loud. It felt like 5<sup>th</sup> grade physics, which the Detective had flunked.

“It’s you!” the Detective stated shocked. “What are *you* doing here?” he demanded brusquely.

“Well...” Pétur gestured at his bare arse merging with the toilet seat.

“No, I mean what was that noise? That laugh...” The Detective glanced around the cubicle, as though someone could be hiding in the toilet brush holder.

“Oh, I was just playing a teaser of Mikkel Jørgensen’s comeback album. I suppose it sounded odd, huh?” Pétur answered casually, a little too casually for someone who’d just been caught with



their pants down. Although he trusted Pétur blindly, the Detective suspected him of hiding shit.

He waited until Pétur had flushed and walked back out into the party with him.

He ate a few miracle berries and excavated fossil thoughts. All the years of common carousing in bars and escaping from work. Two schooligans rolling spliffs, pulling tricks, and placing bets on Super Mario Kart. How they helped grow each other's customer base by word of mouth, and relentlessly sought the itch for their scratch. Scoring chicks with magic tricks at bra fitting events. But since the poetic murderer had become the most significant case of the Detective's life, the core of their friendship slipped away, like the flesh from a mango.

Back at the party, the dancefloor was now overcrowded. Many guests had shared the event on Facebook. Hipsters had inflated the event. There was no chance of finding anything here. And off he was, back to his office, because nobody else would do his job.

Autumn aroma scrambled up to the nose. The spell seduced. Threadbare boots. Magical motion. Dissoluteness. Whispering leaves within the flux of becoming free—for fertiliser. Damp earth and decaying grass hung in the air. Fungi, the great recyclers, were already at work. Yet bikinis and muscles were still posing at the park. It was nearing late summer and the citizens of Copenhagen were keen to make the most of it.

Hansen stumbled over a voiceless earthworm. He fell. Fate? At least he could now discern the hitch-

hiking ants, clinging to the underside of a beetle's head. It was a reminder: he had to get an update from Dr Beetle. But first, the final swim of the year by the Calving Bridge. Hansen was a keen wild swimmer, he enjoyed the buzz of the cold, murky river water. The fun activity was right up the Detective's street. He climbed over the railings of the bridge, firmly holding onto the *No Swimming* sign. Kingfisher-like, he nosedived into the water below. The Detective's penis was suddenly smaller than expected. Good thing his wife wasn't there. The water was chilly. Too chilly. The bare muscles and midriffs had fooled him. The Detective retreated.

He found a towel underneath a sunbathing lady on the edge of the river. She didn't seem wet, so Hansen didn't feel bad about making use of it. He tugged it from underneath her, landing her gently on the warm summer grass as a treat for her naked back. Ignoring the lady's yells, he rubbed his body warm with the towel and wisdom entered his pores meekly. Yin-Yang: the weak gender is as strong as the strong gender, owing to the weakness of the strong for the weak. And both genders can be both, but are always in search of harmony. Deep shit. Knowledge to keep secret. His job left no room for weakness.

On his way back to the house happy pigs crossed the street. The cars mocked them with aggressive beeps. Voluntarily, the pig family strolled to the slaughterhouse. As a clever species Buddhism was practiced, and the pigs curtsied in alliance with the wisdom of silence. They knew that they would soon

become higher life forms. Their physical bodies transformed into the most delicious of meat.

The sight of the pigs walking freely to their death handed a nugget of pure truth to the Detective. The truth was an unending stream of gold, which Hansen had to level, dig, drag and ditch. Hansen felt the sight compelled him to dream. The pigs' knowledge of their impending doom, the cycle of decay and death, it all left Hansen with a surprising feeling of hunger

The Detective switched to the funny side of the street. Obviously, he was coming closer to the poetic murderer. That night at the party was proof, the murderer was close, and he knew Hansen was looking for him. That shadow he had followed was swift and quick-witted, but speed led to mistakes. The Detective was sure he'd soon have this case under wraps.

He walked up the hill to his home. His garden was still lively. The flowers were throwing a party for the buzzing bees and Hansen's hedges had grown wild, getting themselves acquainted with next doors' fence and curling their tendrils through the railings. The apple tree Slimbo, however, looked solemn and did not bow its bough as Hansen approached. Bare, crowfootish twigs were waving solemnly. Slimbo detested the sight of summer coming to an end, he couldn't bear the pain of the leaves as they tore from him, so he shook them all off early in a spiteful rage. He regretted it almost immediately, he hated baring his branches to the world and missed the ability to wave his leaves around foolishly. Hansen gave him a conciliatory pat as he passed.

Inside the Detective lit his pipe, puffed a bit, and baked up a cup of tea in the oven. The house was empty, and the Detective settled in his favourite arm chair, watching the summer sun slowly make its way to the horizon. He ate a few miracle berries and was berry, berry grateful for the present moment.



Slimbo in Autumn

## CHAPTER 26

A bored bison scratched its wild neck against a snag that was attached to a tree. A few of his friends, dressed for the cold in golden brown fleece pants, were browsing on the field, turning over the grass with their hooves in search of the most delectable vegetation.

The bison continued its scratching, grunting in delight as he centred in on a particularly troublesome flea, shyly, the tree retreated its arm.

Clouds coughed a wet splutter. The bison ceased scratching, not amused, his fleece pants turning matted in the rain. Grunting obnoxiously, he took his anger out on the field and stomped around, turning the green pasture brown and throwing up mud into the darkening clouds, middle-hoofing the sky. He ignored the small antelope that had just entered the field. He was too concerned with his pants to worry about an intruder, especially as they had now begun to smell horrendously, like a wet dog who had rolled in a sheep carcass. The bison hated the smell of dogs, he hated dogs full stop in fact. Quick and small, they could run rings around him. But he didn't care about sharing a field with an antelope, and that was just as well, as Don Cindy was not up for a scrap, not yet anyway.

Don Cindy traversed the field on autopilot, with Hansen on standby. She was well and fresh. Her wound had healed, although she still had a nasty scar. Hansen let her gallop freely for a few laps before he couldn't wait any longer and clambered onto her, cautious not to go too near her wound.

Don Cindy whinnied merrily, happy that the Detective was once again able to ride her. She galloped on, overtaking the bison who foolishly tried to race her.

The vets had done well, she rode faster than she ever had.

After an hour or so, the Detective was forced to slow Don Cindy down, worried that she'd give herself another injury. They headed back into the city, the sound of Don Cindy's hooves echoing familiarly on the cobble stones. Hansen hadn't realised how much he had missed it.

The Detective was, for once, lost in the moment, Don Cindy's elegant trot allowing a stream of wind to twist and twirl every strand on the Detective's head into submission. The rain had stopped, and the sun beamed down on the warm, careless day, joining up Hansen's freckles like a game of connect the dots.

A whiff of caramel brought Hansen round like smelling salts. It hung in the air, pungent and sweet. There! A caramel factory on Hunter's Castle Avenue.

The delicate odour triggered forgotten memories. It reminded Hansen of his childhood home in the countryside outside of Copenhagen. The remote lodge where his mother baked delicious treats that warmed every room with the scent of caramel.

The smell seemed to hug Hansen and envelope him in the hygge atmosphere that was created in the lodge by the freezing winters and the warm log fire.

Looking back, Hansen knew he had had a privileged childhood, his parents weren't wealthy, but they had had enough to keep things hygge.

With his parents' various talents, they always had enough firewood and food, to Hansen, that was all you really needed, back then anyway.

After becoming the city's most successful Detective, a handsome, respected man who was often hounded by the press and by fans, Hansen needed more out of life. But the memories of those times were welcome, as thinking like a child had helped the Detective in many previous cases.

Wide-eyed innocence helped you when solving murder cases. Adults tended to look for motives, circumstances, a reason why someone would go to such lengths. Children tend to see things more simply and as they really are. Sometimes there's no motive for a murder, no reason for violence or depth to emotion. Sometimes, people just wanted to kill.

Hansen dismounted from his antelope and headed policestationwards. The afternoon drowsiness awoke coffee thirst and diverted his journey. Hansen headed towards Café Macaque in search of caffeine and a reckless desire to spend his small change.

Chalkboards lined the street outside the coffee house. Swirly writing advertised the latest overpriced sludge from the chain coffee store. Hansen had seen people posting selfies with their own Café Macaque Coffee Togo. Smiling, dry-lipped poses with a coffee held out in an over-decorated paper cup.

The advertising and handwritten signs grabbed hold of Hansen's collar violently. He had to get his own Coffee Togo, his fans must know he was also hip enough for the beverage. They had been cold towards



him of late. The chalkboards promised popularity in the form of a hot coffee.

They only sold coffee Togo to go. This was preferable to staying in, as in the coffee house Hansen often had to curb his temper. The overenthusiastic barista once again tried very hard to misunderstand him.

“One Coffee Togo, please.” He emphasized the *please*, hoping politeness would save him from the performance. He should have known it would only encourage them.

“Hey-hey-hey! I hope you’re having an amazing day. What kind of coffee for you, sir?”

“Coffee Togo!”

“Great! So what d’you want, latte, cappuccino, espresso?”

“No! Togo, like your promo, outside.”

The barista continued to look at him blankly, his mouth gaping to one side as though the coffee fumes had sped up his thoughts until they had overwhelmed him.

Unexpected as the bounty of late summer, the Detective sighed, before unfurling a few notes of childlike wonderment onto the counter. He went behind it, and poured the coffee himself. The biblefit boy tried to stop him. The Detective hempcuffed him (with hemp fibre) to the espresso machine, and off he went with a steaming cup of coffee Togo and a selfie to prove it.

The pavement by the police department was having a siesta. Not a police officer in sight, presumably they were inside, one hand on a furrowed brow, the other on tedious but essential

paperwork. Or, more likely, eating hot dogs and watching YouTube videos about paint drying. It wasn't a job for the faint hearted, every so often the police officers would have to jump and switch to a blank excel document whenever a supervisor walked past. But still, Hansen couldn't be too careful.

He somersaulted past the windows of the police department, landing next to the front steps. The Detective was infamous for his idiosyncratic methods. Unparalleled in his faculty to go unnoticed and in his bizarre lack of consciousness in the present moment. These reckless traits were seen as problematic by some. It was the view of those high up in the police that Hansen left himself vulnerable of making fatal mistakes by not concentrating, or by not following procedure. However, Hansen's intuition had often proven the school police wrong, and made him the four-time winner of the *Best Detective Ever!* trophy. Unfortunately, this success had already made Hansen quite unpopular among the police. Since the death of the police president, this unpopularity had grown into outright hatred. Hence, he had to camouflage himself.

"Fries, feet, and farts—I smell the scent of men," he exclaimed impetuously. People turned their heads. Two hobos were sixty-nining in the front yard of the police department, looking at him with a tinge of disgust.

oo Hansen wore a wig and was camouflaged with a smartphone in his hands, no one would suspect a thing. On entering, he zig-zagged in crab movements through the police department's foyer to the elevator, preserving his incognito. Only the

receptionist Liv Leopard had spotted him. But, like most people, she was privately a fan.

Awkward silence in the elevator. The Detective told his evergreen story of Freya Fox (the famous fox, who had lost her hind legs in a terrible accident). Freya had befriended a nest of rabbits, which fed their offspring to her. Afterwards, she felt heartbroken and became the first vegetarian fox. Her fable had become popular in Ancient India and had spread all over the world. On the seventh floor Hansen jumped out of the elevator, pushed by a tailwind of applause.

Dr Beetle's office was accessible through an unusually small and narrow door. The Detective crouched down, turning the wooden handle, then jumped as a tailless cat darted out. Hansen paused for a second, watching the cat leap away, unbalanced without a tail, before entering Dr Beetle's office.

In the middle of the room a trampoline stood unemployed. Beside this, a tray table, with, maybe, cognac on it, and cigars, perhaps, but definitely clementines. Beetle had been crawling up his desk, and fell on his back onto the floor. He lay on his back, cycling with his legs. He was doing his daily yoga routine.

"Hey doc, what's happening?" Hansen asked, while helping Beetle up.

"Oh, Detective! I barely recognised you." Beetle stood up and bowed like a grazing cow. The Detective smiled, relieved to know that his ability to disguise himself hadn't diminished.

"I have something that might interest you."

He beckoned Hansen over to his laptop. Dr Beetle had posted the Detective's hand-drawn picture

of the murderer on his blog. A user nicknamed *Ripper!* had posted several explicit poems underneath it.

Dr Beetle had tracked the IP address. Someone was logging in to a computer in the North of Copenhagen. The murderer was in the city, at least for now.

“Jackpot baby,” Hansen shouted overjoyed—six hits on the lottery ticket. Sudden departure. The trace demanded his rapt attention and in Beetle’s tiny office he felt hemmed in from all sides, like a goldfish in a glass. The Detective took the piece of evidence in his mind’s eye and left.



Freya Fox

**CHAPTER 27**

In the misty midst of the weekend the Detective was invited to a family festivity on the upper lip of Zealand.

The occasion was taking place on an isolated farm surrounded by fields for as far as the eye could see. The dilapidated farm house was like a game of Jenga, with rooms built on top of rooms, outbuildings linked to the main house by shaking corridors, and a huge thatched roof covering all of it and providing the mice a perfect habitat to explore.

The sheriff of the farm was Niels Nickelodeon, a very distant relation of Hansen's. Despite the unfriendly nature of their DNA, Hansen had always got along well with Niels Nickelodeon. They seemed to gravitate towards each other at family events. They enjoyed each other's company and tended to encourage each other in their merriness. This had led to a few incidents that the rest of the family were ashamed to discuss, mostly they involved cheap liquor and Hansen's stash of trash costumes. When Hansen's parents died, he no longer received invites to the family get-togethers. Hansen was shocked at his relatives' coldness towards him. He had always believed they loved his unpredictable behaviour, it certainly left them feeling alive. Well, apart from that one year when he had given Uncle Harold a heart attack by dressing in women's garments.

Before he had met Don Cindy and his wife, his relatives had left him alone on Christmas Day. Hansen, trying to make the best out of a bad situation, had acquired some mannequins from the department

store near to his house and dressed them up as his dear relatives. He arranged them around his kitchen table, Aunt Geraldine with her pearls and terrifying boil on the tip of her nose, then Uncle Howard with his too short shorts and shiny shoes, worn always with golden laces...

Hansen had seated a range of aunts, uncles and cousins around his table to keep him company. But then the pork roast burned, and everyone was so appalled by Hansen's cooking that not one person spoke throughout the entire meal.

Soon after, Hansen threw his aunts, uncles and cousins unceremoniously into the bin behind his house and rang up Niels to see how his festive celebrations were coming along.

As it turned out Niels had also been banned from events. They made a pact to get together at every occasion from then onwards, and they had.

Things had changed of course, Hansen had married and so had Niels, twice in fact, and he had divorced both shortly after. Niels also had kittens and two grown-up daughters, one from each marriage. The lot of them were sharp, unsociable and scratched when cornered.

Hansen was staying in a room at the top of the house. Although the Nickelodeon family was once wealthy, it was clear that the money was slowly escaping. Great bundles of notes were slipping through the broken window panes and were being burnt up the chimney.

Hansen was sleeping on a hard, single bed with a thin, hand-knitted quilt. He had worn his giraffe costume to bed for the first night. It was colder here,

outside of the city and there was no heater in the room.

Niels Nickelodeon, despite his obvious money troubles, was keen to be the perfect host. He had planned two activities, clay pigeon shooting and a pork roast dinner.

Niels woke them all up early the second morning by grabbing a cockerel and taking it around the house, squeezing it until it crowed in each room and awoke the occupant with a start. It was an unwise choice by Niels to attempt this with the Detective, who awoke fearing he was being attacked by a horny goat and leaped out of bed. After a night tossing and turning, his giraffe costume was all ruffled and overbalanced him. Gun raised he toppled into Niels and they both rolled down the many stairs.

Luckily, Hansen's giraffe costume was fairly padded, and its neck saved them from suffering seriously. The gun shots in the windows didn't help the cold, but Niels said he would patch them up with old banana stickers.

The rifle-horny mob assembled in the yard, ready to blow gunpowder into the air. Everything was prepared on the wide, yawning fields. One of the daughters held a speech, her hair blowing out of her face, revealing the seriousness of her expression. She bravely finished with a determined wail, signifying that she would triumph against the pretend clay birds.

Meanwhile, the Detective breathed. The wind whistled the oo Hansen anthem, as if it were the Detective himself, mastering every obstacle playfully:



*Zero-Zero-Hansen-Zero-Zero-Hansen—  
Double-power like tandem.*

Hansen watched as everyone took their turn to aim at the flying clay discs. The farmer's daughters were excellent shots, you could tell they had grown up hunting. You could see the predatory flash in their eyes as they raised the rifle and they aimed for the centre of the discs. They were shooting to kill, and together they broke disc after disc into pieces.

Now under immense pressure to impress, the Detective took the rifle from the youngest daughter's muscular arms. He almost dropped it, not anticipating the weight, he was used to pistols. He held the unfamiliar metal up, hoped for the best and shot. A grey mass fell out of the sky. Hansen grinned but, as he turned around to acknowledge the applause, he realised that no one was near the trap. Hansen had shot down a real pigeon. Feathers met rain in the sky, tarring and feathering the hunters.

Hansen attempted to ignore the tiny bird that had been placed, speckled and headless, on the table in front of him. Hands wrestled on the table for lemon cake and refreshments.

Niels had set up a table outdoors, next to the barn, fairy lights glistened and lit up the feast in front of them. A bonfire gleamed in the darkness, heating up the night with sparks like stars. Hansen had been pleasantly surprised until the baked pigeon was positioned delicately in front of him.

Still, the soft smile of the two kittens playing next the barn was lovely. Hansen watched them play for a while as the talk turned to Hansen's kill. He was being urged to take the first piece of the bullet-tainted bird. He needed a distraction. Hansen took action. There! A little pig had escaped from the barn.

The farmer's daughters roared in dismay at the loss of their breakfast sausages. Arms were flung out to catch it, but the pig ducked under them easily, running under the table and knocking the food into the mud on the ground.

"Don't panic, I'll get it." The Detective said, authoritatively. Calm, cool and collected, the Detective hopped right onto the bucking animal. To accelerate, he tickled the sow's belly. Nobody else was ready for a race, he had the upper-hand.

Someone shouted: "*Wait!*" But it was too late. The pig was speeding insanely, oinking and bucking, attempting to unfriend the unknown passenger. But Hansen clasped to it tightly, tickling its belly to accelerate even more. The Detective found it was not much different to riding Don Cindy after she'd had a large meal. The pig, however, did smell only slightly worse but was a lot smaller than Don Cindy, Hansen's toes teased the ground. After his boots had dipped in enough pig poo to tart them up, he raised them near to the pig's shoulders. With his feet there he realised that, by putting a little pressure on either side, he could direct the pig's movements. Annoyed at this control, the pig deliberately disobeyed him, oinking in amusement it sped up towards a shallow pond and leapt into it. Hansen released the pig.

Together they wallowed in the muddy pond, oinked around and befriended each other like two kids in a sandpit.

A winning lottery ticket slipped from the Detective's jacket, and got lost in the mud. Unknown luck, for he loved nothing but his job. It had taken a wallow with a pig to realise it. Hansen could have been stuck in an office from graduation to retirement, typing meaningless information into a computer and making someone else rich. Instead he made himself rich and famous through accidents and good luck. The pig had reminded him how short life is by the chunky bacon slices displayed on his back and Hansen realised he had it pretty good. How far that little pig had projected its dreams! It shone a good deed upon a weary world.

Back in the yard Niels Nickelodeon was grateful that the Detective had brought back his little pig. The farmer's daughters had captured Hansen's ride and snapchatted it around the world. Rural and isolated, it was nothing to them but a funny distraction from slaughtering cattle. They had little understanding of *The Broccoli Revolution*, vegan hipsters dressed in leather, the cat memes and violent protests against violence. The farmer's daughters didn't understand what aggression they had released until it was too late. Hansen was attacked due to humanity's strange repulsion of the uncanny. The hatred was communicated in tumbler threads and dislikes on Facebook.

The Detective coated himself in layers of soul-sane dirt. This would not just protect him from the anger, but would ward off the mosquitos which were

in season, he had protected himself with the lotion of Mother Earth, counteracting any environmentalist anger.

In spite of his role as an outsider, the farmer took pity on him and he was invited to stay for dinner. Roast pork, XXL. The Detective punched his portion soft and ate it. The crispy crust tasted unreasonably super.

The pork mixed with liquor had created a cosy ambience across the living room and the crowd started singing, everything seemed Hakuna Matata. *Lalalalalala, lalalalalalala... something Danish... lalalalalala, lalalalalala.*

A little weekend break on the upper lip of Zealand reset the Detective's nature to zero-zero.

Hansen went home. He was always on the move. He had a container load of things to do. Because someone had to do it.



## CHAPTER 28

“I’ll take the sharpest pineapple you have, carrots, horseradish—large—and two kilos of savoy cabbage, green with a fir-round heart.”

It was a weekend, the city bustling with unwitting citizens and the murderer was shopping in search of a murder weapon.

He was being careful, he knew that the Detective was after him, but who the hell could know his plan? His own mind was the only bearer of his secrets.

He had parked his Tesla on the Kissing Bridge, rendering the bridge unretractable. Ships honked furiously and were forced to anchor.

Real hipsters<sup>10</sup> took no-look pictures at the quay wall, top-knots and biker boots impeccably shiny, enjoying the low-key chaos that the murderer was causing. People were like that, disorder was all fun and games until stuff got murderous.

Meanwhile, a salamander-silent parking inspector was about to go berserk. He tapped his note-pad with his pen, rage building up inside of his water-proof jacket. He paced around the Tesla. The murderer felt safe. He felt cool. He felt so cool that he wrote the parking inspector a ticket.

“Bank Transfer within 2 days or MobilePay,” he said, while handing him the ticket. Then he disappeared with a chuckle. The baffled inspector knew neither that this was the murderer nor that he had no driver’s licence.

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<sup>10</sup> The word hipster is a semantic Joker and can be thrown around in every setting.

The murderer had decided that the Tesla wasn't his, the real owner could deal with the parking fines. The murderer's kleptomania was, of course, an issue, he could admit that. He had stolen the car for no reason other than the thrill of it. The owner had been in the dog salon, allowing her bulldog a day of rest and relaxation with a puppy massage. She should really have saved the money for herself, she would need it with all the parking tickets the murderer had earned her. Unfortunately, in the murderer's eyes, his responsibility for that car ended as soon as he had released the wheel.

The murderer left the car to pay for itself and took the metro instead, carefully costumed in a picture frame. He had grabbed the frame from outside an antique store, the gold gilding appealed to him, as well as the intricate swirls and patterns. He thought he could disguise himself as an old English painting, and, considering the amount of people who were stopping to admire him, it was working quite well.

It didn't work so well on the train, the only seat faced away from the front, so the other passengers weren't taken in with his painting disguise and instead were staring at his solitary scar. His scar was still new enough that it bothered him, yet clearly old enough that people seemed to think it was acceptable to stare at. It was a long thin slice running down his back, the top peeking out like an annoying acquaintance. Rage against the spleen. His hatred took the form of King-Kong and climbed up his spine, nettle-stinging his monkey-mind.

Tomorrow, he would kill. He had waited long enough. Would it become his masterpiece?

Before the big day, he avoided logging in to his hacked computer.

The Detective had predicted the murderer's movements, and went to a sex shop to purchase a proper whip.

A friend of a friend, who had a daughter, whose brother had a mother, who was into horses, had heard from her aunt, who owned a swingers' club, that the best whips on the market were available in sex shops. Don Cindy had to be faster than ever to defeat the poetic murderer.





## CHAPTER 29

The Detective, paced around the house. He knew the murder would occur soon, he could feel it in the vibe of the city. The days were shorter, the nights longer. People on the street hurried fearfully around, no longer stopping to chat. The markets had closed up, shutters locked, and apology notes scribbled hurriedly on pinned notices. Winter had come to Copenhagen early, and the murderer was taking full advantage.

The Detective felt *hygge*, he had the chimney's company. He could sit in the house all day, resting. But then he headed into the city, inspired by a thought to buy his victory outfit. He would need to sport the garb of the hippest sort—boots, trousers, shirts; verse, chorus, verse; a melodic melange in the eye of the beholder.

He lounged down the avenues, searching for the perfect tailoring and attentive sales assistants. A pretty brunette caught his eye with an invitation to spend. Headless mannequins in elegant suits beckoned him closer. Hansen glanced at himself in the shop's window, picturing himself capturing the murderer, the photos in the press of him leading out the miscreant in handcuffs. Hansen would be suited and booted, the most stylish crime catcher the world had ever seen. He paused, then hurried to a cash machine. Ebb tide in his bank account. Damn. Hansen counted his coins. It did not matter. Soon he would catch the murderer, and cash in many love letters from his adoring fans.

The Detective managed his new situation humbly, since to him, Copenhagen was like an exotic jungle full of excitement and beauty in abundance—he did not need much money. But his fans demanded that he dressed freshly. He chose *Second Hand for Men* on Hunter's Castle Avenue. No sales assistant greeted him on entry, the green-haired girl with a nose ring merely glanced up, then, seeing he didn't look like a thief, relaxed and went back to her phone.

The Detective wandered around, a garish mix of pastels and tie-dye refused to meet his eye. He pulled out clothes at random, trying out a pink cowboy hat and some white leather driving gloves. He draped a feathered feather boa around his neck and tried a Hawaiian shirt on for size. The Detective decided that the look, although aesthetically pleasing, was just not right for the vibe he was going for.

He disrobed, placing the items neatly back into a chaotic pile. That was when he saw it, the perfect coat for a Detective.

*Marine blue trench coat, 67% alpaca, 33% cotton, one button missing, and no newer than yesterday.*

The saleswoman looked up from her phone, checking whether the Detective was looking over. She looked. He looked. They looked!

Hansen was a particular customer, with precise preferences, he was sure the assistant could see this from his burgundy waistcoat and glittery sandals. He paused, pretending he hadn't seen the greatest coat in Copenhagen. It was not advisable to seem too keen, not with his bank account. He jiggled around to the Danish rock that blared from hidden speakers. Examining the assorted garments that panelled the

shelves, he did not fail to notice that the saleswoman had the reddest lips in the universe.

“I have exactly what you want,” she said, with arms akimbo. The shopping game was on. He knew the saleswoman would say exactly what she had said. Now it was of absolute importance to speak entirely in superlatives, whilst maintaining the highest levels of scepticism. Saleswomen loved that!

First: establish your status. “They call me 00 Hansen: The Detective with the licence to chill.”

The Detective was appropriately aloof. He did want the coat. But the price label jingled at 11,000 kroner. Too much!

The experienced saleswoman sensed his predicament whilst looking outside. Over the years she had gained outstanding peripheral vision. Without staring, she gauged whether there was a demand for further advice. Her multi-faceted face twitched twice.

“How can I help?” she asked eager-beaverly.

“This trench coat might be a bit too porno,” Hansen said, holding it out at arm’s length.

“Perhaps a little, if that’s not what you’re going for...” She sized up the Detective with glowing eyes. “I have exactly what you’re looking for,” she said, trying to excite the Detective, while tap dancing into the light.

This was the phase in which she would gradually distinguish the Detective’s preference. After sixteen seconds’ searching, she presented a blue whale-blue trench coat. Shorter than the one before, and less shiny, Hansen couldn’t believe how stupid he’d been to pass over such magnificence for a flimsy anorak.

He felt like a super-model's husband caught in an affair with a stumpy punk.

Hansen put on the coat and stepped in front of the mirror, it glistened like the sea at midnight under a full moon. The mirror was aroused like a cat by a mouse. Hansen pulled his infamous alternative flamingo pose with whipped-up revolver. Behind him stood the saleswoman. She made a handgun in the mirror and posed like a perfect assistant. What a rare match—the Detective and his new trench coat. Unhesitatingly, he paid the young stylist.

“Do you want a receipt?” she asked, pro forma.

“Yes, and write your fake number on the back!” he replied as she smiled at his opulent nose hair, and then they copulated heavily in her imagination.

Detective oo Hansen was creative like a cloud; his disguises allowed him to take on any shape as he pleased, without anything causing suspicion. His ever-blossoming guise was rooted in the innocence of childishness; the ability to imagine, to play, to not abide by the limits or restrictions set by the mind and allow camouflage beyond what is known to be possible, as the Detective knew people rarely questioned what they saw. But, for now, Hansen was dressed firmly as himself, in his fancy new coat and bouffant hair.

Seductive smells settled in the nose. Dinner was close. Lasagne & La Bamba—unbeatable combo. Nimo's Italian restaurant on Cooldogsgade sounded delectable to the Detective.

“*La-la-la-Lasagne, la-la-la-Lasagne,*” one pizza baker was singing, accompanied by the radio.

On the other side of the street was the Jewish cemetery. Hansen spotted a squirrel on a stone wall, in the midst of a passionate liaison with a croissant. The trees of the cemetery hung over the wall and sowed seeds of discord. There was a scuffle among the branches in the wind; after a while, one wept, leaves fluttering down onto the pathway. Hansen knew it would all end in tears.

The pizza restaurant was neat, not too cheap but not outrageous either, and a salami breeze matched the good vibe. Brick oven fragrances slipped through the door crack and climbed Hansen's gigantic nose hair. Inevitably, he followed the seductive smell.

The restaurant's CDM (Chief Dough Masseur) welcomed Hansen in a Leonard-Cohen-cool voice. "Ciao oo Hansen!"

Tables placed right by the street enabled him to peek at the past-cycling people. To see and to be seen. All kinds of information were served on the street. And, somewhat involuntarily, the Detective never stopped working. He made notes. By the last bite, he felt drowsy and his thoughts drifted away. The dream circus started to play:

*There! A boyband of baboons beaming fake news into each other's hands. And over there! Three camels were in season and had lost fur around the knees. A hippo in black leather fashion approached them with an open zipper and was performing a genital display. The camels were running laughingly away. A family of macaques foraged for urban food, fancying salad from the pavement. A pride of peacocks posed in front of the camera. Who was hipper, the selfie stick or the peacock pressing the trigger?*

“Zero-zero! Zero-zero!” A loud voice sounded behind his ears. “oo, are you okay?” A waiter awakened Hansen. He was still drowsy, but alert enough to save all impressions carefully in his mind museum.

He wondered whether the poetic murderer also liked pizza.

The more he thought about this mysterious man, the more the feeling grew upon him that they might not be so different from each other. He felt a strange connection to him. They both enjoyed a liquorice treat of course, and they both seemed intoxicated by poetic musings of the mind. But many people shared a love of liquorice root and the vegetable market was full of starving poets clutching avocado sandwiches. What did the Detective really have in common with the real wickedness of such a false chicken breast?

The Detective paid the bill and was about to leave when, despite the shadow of circumstance, cosmetic fanatics in floral-patched jackets turned up and boys played with their smart toys, dressed in Havana Club straw hats and ragged flared trousers; many wet *mwahs* occurred! Bloggers gathered around the restaurant, obvious with their chic notepads and eager pens at the ready, and photographers with jewellery-decorated cameras took their positions. A black stretched limo decreased its momentum. A fashionable halt. A shadow with an incredible aura emerged from it.

“OMG! It’s Mikkel Jørgenseeeeeeeeeen! He is ALIVE!” One of the bloggers screamed herself out of a midlife crisis.

Mikkel shook his long black hair and posed for the cameras, he squeaked merrily and slid smoothly over the ground in knee-high roller skates. His entourage had posters for his comeback album—*The Broccoli Revolution*. Despite apparently being dead during its release, Mikkel had come back to promote it, sales were drying up and something had to be done.

The Detective observed, made notes, and was disturbed by Mikkel, who was lasciviously licking on a slice of pizza. Jørgensen thrust his tongue forward, piercing a hole through the middle of the dough, where a piece of salami once dwelled, and kissed and licked and thrust so neatly and ably that it looked hip. Then he waited for the cameras to flash, before thrusting his tongue again. The scene calmed as Mikkel retreated back to the comfort of his stretched limo with a wave and a grin.

The Detective struck up a cigarette using the whole pack of matches and eyed up a blogger's countenance—it seemed more pixels than flesh. Hansen's quickly-updating mind calculated all kinds of possibilities and linked them up to the hitherto-gathered clues. It seemed he already knew who the murderer was.





**CHAPTER 30**

A sun-coloured piece of paper lay folded under a lantern on the notoriously hip Queen La La Louise's Bridge. The bridge was in the centre of Copenhagen and everyone who was anyone converged to mingle on its cobbled road at the weekend. The pedestrianised walkway was covered with an oriental style awning. Chinese lanterns hung happily from the sides, illuminating the contoured, drink-bedazzled faces of the city's bright young things. In the early hours of Monday morning though, the bridge was silent. The young crowd that had gathered and danced at the weekend was in bed, eagerly awaiting another Monday at their cool coding jobs. The lanterns had been extinguished and the takeout packaging that once held groovy vegan food that was good for the earth now lay strewn across the pavement, making its way to the river and the oceans.

The shadow of a mysterious man vanished into the narrowing canyon of Currywurstgade. He had a backward-tilted walk, and his eyelids hung low, so that you could only see a slice of bloodshot yellow. This all combined into an arrogant swagger so that, despite the man's ugliness, he had a kind of rock star vibe, an attractive, rebellious attitude that seeped through his leather jacket and kicked up his boots.

*"So cool!"* A roadside birch thought, as it stared awkwardly at the man as he passed.

Otherworldly, the man's gliding feet seemed to hover over the asphalt. His aura beamed out of him, elegant and fantastic. The source of his beautiful aura was unknown, but it allowed the man vast fame and

freedoms. It allowed him to overlook the façades of passing people, so that he could read their thoughts, desires and dreams, and manipulate them to his will.

Rising from his neck crawled an earthworm. No wait! It was a scar. A slice down his back. People wondered how he came to have such a disfiguring scar. A violent act it must have been, as it was pretty straight for an accident, a car crash or a fall.

In the city's current suspicious state, it wasn't wise to have such a visible link to the criminal underworld. One might even say he could be the poetic murderer. But what the heck — he was such sensitive chap. And he behaved like a little boy, and carried with him toys, candy and children's books. Perhaps he was child-like, the accident or whatever caused the scar had forced him to revert and act younger than he really was. Or perhaps he was working in the kindergarten. He always seemed to get along with children, he was good with them. He was lively, funny and entertaining.

This was all show, an act he put on to preserve his murderous intentions. It was all nonsense, although it proved how far people would go to see the good in someone. The man had disguised his identity carefully and had multiple personalities. Shortly before a murder occurred, he played with his toys, or gifted candy, in order to appear harmless and build trust.

An unknown woman on the vegetable market had once asked him what he did. The man knew she was asking about his job, but instead he told her about his vocation. He answered, honestly, that he made people happy, he did this in order to get to

know them better. If they were good people, he would continue to make them happy. But quite frankly, he would also murder bad women. The woman jumped back in horror. The man knew she was scared, in his mind that meant she must be bad, otherwise she would have nothing to fear.

When he reached his home, he washed the vegetables with utmost care under cold water; even gently caressed the savoy cabbage, horseradish and carrots. Once he had said that a day with savoy cabbage was a good day. On a good day he felt happy and easy-going, his plans to murder were put to one-side and he enjoyed his various hobbies including sandwich-making and bird-watching. But what would happen if he was running low on savoy?

Detective oo Hansen spotted a folded paper tied to a railing as he was lolloping joyfully along Queen La La Louise's Bridge. The crowd parted happily to let him through.

The hipsters enjoyed Hansen's fresh take on transportation and his refusal to conform by purchasing a fancy sports car. Just as Hansen had been basking in the admiration, the paper waved in the wind at him from underneath the bridge's stone barrier.

He stopped Don Cindy, who grunted, annoyed at having her joyful jogging interrupted. Hansen ignored her huffing and slid from her back. He unfolded the paper. It was another poem. oo Hansen seemed to have a sixth sense for the details that matter. Immediately, he sat down on a bench and read the poem out loud.

*Dear Detective:*

*I carry tunes and couch in step with  
That flash beyond earthly measure  
Drives my age smaller as to expect  
—a kingfisher—keen to nosedive.  
And with high speed the rub in the wind rises  
My youth, like a son, is young forever.*

*I carry tunes and couch in step with  
That green vigour—wittiness—  
Vaccine against bourgeois  
Drives my age smaller as to expect  
—A movie star—fallen from the sky  
I am the rain's fresh foyer.*

*The headlong dive that fuses in water  
In the rhythm of flower's circadian clock  
Can't fight against the hour.  
Comfortably stunned, uplifting,  
—An elephant trunk—ivory-towered  
Secretly in love with the music.*

*I carry tunes and couch in step with  
That green vigour—wittiness—  
Drives my flower.*

*You shall be the first who arrives upon the secret of the  
murders. Thus, I have left behind another sign for you on  
the old dairy farm north of the city.*

*May the force bewig you,  
M.*

Hansen felt his throat tighten as he finished the poem. He looked up into the sorrowful eyes of Don Cindy. The poem was a trap, of course. Why else would the murderer give him clues like that? Why else would he lead Hansen to a secluded spot like the old dairy farm, deserted after the milk prices were driven down? The Detective knew he was the murderer's next prey. The poem was a death threat, not a clue. The murderer wanted to murder him. He would go where he wanted him to, but not tonight. If he was going to be ambushed, he at least needed a night's rest.



## CHAPTER 31

And 'tis no earnest argument to discount rest. The play, in its entirety, is life. To speed means to be always in debt.

*Buzz Buzz.* Hansen's phone was ringing like an angry bee. It was interrupting the Detective's midday nap. He answered the call. "What?"

"Detective oo Hansen, you are being notified of a murder." A robotic voice said, it was the police department's automatic update machine. It informed Hansen, and others, of serious crimes that had occurred, mainly to save the police department receiving nagging calls pressing for updates. Hansen confirmed that he was human to the robot by identifying the two pictures containing zwieback on the screen of his new smartphone. Then the voice consented to fill him in with the gruesome details. The robotic voice listing the victim's injuries in such an inhuman way left Hansen cold and numb.

Still drowsy despite the shock, he picked up his .44 Magnum Macadamia. Swiftly, he attired himself in his new blue whale-blue trench coat that covered his enviable hips, saddled Don Cindy and licked the ice cream he had grabbed for breakfast. He had to be quick, as the police could ruin all the evidence again. The desire to catch the murderer was immense. Hansen whipped Don Cindy into motion. The crosswind was fresh. She galvanised gallantly and gathered momentum, hooves deeply ploughing the gravel of the macadam. Don Cindy was faster than ever with light taps from the Detective's whip.



The wind's trailing coat ruffled the autumn leaves on the street. A long-lasting marriage of silence and calm impregnated the air. Shortly after, a bird cut through and divorced the silence and calm in two.

The Detective manoeuvred Don Cindy alongside the lakes which were in love with the water. Two swans—birds of a feather—liked to flock together, formed a heart with their throats at close quarters. Their closeness reminded the Detective of something he was trying very hard to forget. The Detective sighed. He missed his wife. Her visits had become less frequent, the silence more heated, and now Hansen was beginning to yearn less for the times she returned. Hansen didn't know where she went when she was away from their home, to a friend's perhaps, or a lover's. The Detective hadn't always been the faithful husband he had promised to be, so he couldn't blame her if she had sought out romance. He just wished she would come back without that persistent frown which marked her otherwise beautiful face. He even wished she would complain about his cleaning and cook them both terrible food.

At least at home the Detective knew his wife was safe. There was a murderer on the loose, a murderer who seemed to be seeking out women. He was starting to panic when he received descriptions of victims, imagining they were describing his wife's small chin, her silky, straight hair, but Hansen knew he was being stupid. The murder victim here was described as a white, middle-aged lady with an enormous chin. Hansen shook his head to free his troublesome thoughts and urged Don Cindy to gallop faster.

Moments later, they arrived at the murder scene. A bourgeois house outside of the city. It was a suburban dream. An identical house in the type of middle-class neighbourhood you could find anywhere in the world. Children played on bikes down the tree-lined avenues, men washed large, expensive cars in driveways and hired gardeners tended to well-pruned front gardens. But for the neighbours closest to the murder scene this idyll now had a darker side. Housewives stood outside the police tape, whispering to each other with hands over shocked, lip-sticked mouths. It was probably the most exciting thing that had ever happened to them. The noise of the terrified screams, the sirens wailing through the neighbourhood, stuff like that just didn't happen somewhere like this.

The traces on the muddy ground revealed that the police had already mutilated the tracks of any previous vehicles by driving over them carelessly. Among the clues erased were, perhaps, hints of the murderer.

"Ah, Detective! We've been expecting you," shouted chief inspector Pete Stickleback sharply, with scissor lips cutting out the words of Hansen's. He led the Detective into the house.

"What do we have?" the Detective enquired once he had pieced his words back together.

"A mature woman, with tons of make-up applied," Pete Stickleback proclaimed loudly.

"Yes, I can see that." The Detective glanced reluctantly at the woman sitting dead in an armchair in front of the television. The rouge on her cheeks was

now blended with blood and her ruby lips stood out against her pale skin.

Out of the window Hansen could see a large pineapple tree, bare, stood there stoutly and peeking at the two men, not giving a bark about Sir Sticklebacks shouting.

As it seemed, the murderer had cut her throat with pineapple leaves.

The poor woman was stiff-dead in the blood-drenched TV chair, bleeding like a dead fox on barbed wire. On the floor were discarded pineapples—completely juiced. It looked disgusting. Hansen observed, Hansen deduced, Hansen knew the truth.

He tasted the pineapple juice.

“A bit warm, but a fine finish,” he said in a posh voice.

The police force shook their heads with contempt. Hansen looked away from them, concentrating on the punchy, well-defined sharpness of the pineapple juice. His eyes lingered on the corpse and it was only now that OO recognised the face of the woman. The curly black hair and over-drawn eyebrows which gave her the look of being constantly surprised was recognisable from the backdrop of reality TV shows.

It was Mia Miaowzi, wife of the famous curler Ronny Hammer who was a monster to social equality. He often appeared on talk shows to discuss some moot point, going redder and redder with fury as another panellist dared have a different view. His wife obeyed him in all things, nodding along when he aired an opinion and remaining beside him despite protesters launching eggs. He batted her away,

moving instead towards younger, more glamorous women. In an effort to become attractive to him Mia had gone through multiple surgeries, to tighten and smooth the wrinkles creeping like veins around her body. Instead of the hoped-for youthfulness, Mia had developed a plastic, shiny skin, her face frozen forever in a half smile. Hansen took the half-smoked cigarette from her hand, lighting it and taking a drag before placing it in their art deco ash tray.

The police officers groaned audibly.

Impetuously, Hansen body slammed the ground and found blood soaked lingerie, a baby doll and a silk dressing gown, perhaps Mia had plans to seduce her husband after he returned home from a well-publicised dinner with his secretary.

Hansen carefully lifted up the underwear then, as he raised his head, he realised he was right next to the victim's feet, he examined the painted toes for a few seconds, unintentionally smelling them.

Stickleback posed overconfidently, his belt hitched up around his stomach, his stance making his shirt stretch across his ever-growing belly. He glanced sardonically at the Detective. Boldly, he announced the circumstances of the crime, marking his territory like a wolf by urinating onto the unopened post scattered across the floor.

"Here's what happened: the murderer came inside from the back of the house—a kitchen window was tilted open. He must've crept up on his victim, with cats' paws, and cut her throat with the sharp leaves of the pineapple. He approached unnoticed, since our victim was occupied with her favourite TV show: *Neglected Housewives*."

“Bravo!” applauded a younger officer, his blond hair jerking as he clapped. He was eager to impress as he had often been considered a bit of a joke. Mostly due to his name, which was ridiculous when forced to think too much about—Jack Goff. The Detective forced a smile and ended up looking like a badly carved pumpkin.

It was half past seven. The Detective inferred this from the commuting flies who always increased their flying speed from eight to twelve centimetres per second after work.

“Does anyone want coffee? If not, I’ll brew some,” he said, and made some coffee in the victim’s kitchen. He waited until the police were lounging around, hugging hot mugs of coffee, then he strolled outside, without a sip or a goodbye. He knew the police force would never refuse free coffee.

This way, he would win some time. He had smelt the sneaky checkpoint of success. He was very hip. On his way, he thought about the brand-new facts. What did the inspectors inspect? Nothing important. They had overlooked the most significant hint given. At the heel of the victim’s feet, there was another poem, left by the murderer, written in the secret language of fancy. Squirtantly, Hansen was, by now, fluent in the murderer’s poetic verse. It was another hint of the writer’s strangely beautiful view of the world.

*Dear Detective:*

*When from your flowers of thought I turn  
At noon—in bloom, a rose's petals dance  
Along to photosynthesis; I hardly know  
Which of—pun wizard or withered pun—am I?*

*You shall decide!  
May the force bewig you,  
M.*



## CHAPTER 32

Hansen had left the office early, he had been staring at the poem since his blueberry porridge and he was still no closer to finding the murderer than he was to getting blueberry stains out of his Icelandic woollen socks. Now he was sat at the kitchen table, watching the night swallow Slimbo and fireflies slowly begin to glow, drifting lazily across the window.

It was eight o'clock. Detective OO Hansen read the newspaper. The headline smacked him in the face:

### **THE POETIC MURDERER      FLOWERS AGAIN!**

Not again, not another murder. After the murder of Mia the press went into overload. A week went by before Mia was removed from the front page, appearing instead in gossip columns, her life laid bare for a second of slight interest. But finally, the pandemonium had calmed, if the press were reporting a murder it wasn't Mia. It meant the murderer had acted again. He could not believe his eyes.

The Detective read through the story, trying to make sense of the words jumping around in front of his eyes, but he couldn't. Then he realised — the headline was a trick to evoke sensation. In fact, the article was concerning wildflowers, which were able to induce poetic thoughts on long walks. It was recycling the well-known fact that those poetic thoughts, many a time, infected, virus-like, the view of the beholder. In their contemplative state, the



person was more likely to sink into depression, resulting in higher suicide rates in October.

The Detective went to the bathroom to sprinkle himself with some scent. Basil perfume, advertised as simple, yet manly. His wife used to love it, the smell of good herbs rarely appeared in her kitchen, so it was a nice treat for her.

He put his hands on the sink and leaned closer to the mirror. He had grown thinner, deprived of his wife's terrible cooking, and it didn't suit him. His eyes were sunken and red, a hangover from sleepless nights. His hair was no longer voluminous and sleek, instead it was wild, he patted it slightly, a testament of his even temper.

He gave himself a second glance, analysing the angle of his chin, his carved cheekbones, perhaps he was being too hard on himself. The mirror was aroused like a penis allergic to gravity. A bulge in his pants—quickly ironed.

Hansen jetted off. Don Cindy was attending a ten-year alumni reunion at the zoo. It was a typical affair, she had dressed up in her fanciest halter, keen to make clear she was the antelope of the famous Detective Hansen. Others would try to one up her, of course, imaginary tales of television appearances and stories about being the pets of some boring celebrity, but Don Cindy knew she was the star of the zoo's alumni.

The Detective went to surprise her. He passed by the giraffes' enclosure and proudly showed his Detective ID. The giraffes looked at him disbelievingly, with tilted heads. They had never believed that Don Cindy was actually the Detective's

antelope, she must have hired a look-a-like. They let him past in silence, waiting for Hansen to get out of ear-shot. An owl nestled in Hansen's hairdo, it gave it the fabulousness that it was missing and Hansen was sure he looked splendid and ready to impress Don Cindy's friends.

But then, there! A bowless acacia was growing unapologetically in the antelope's enclosure. The roots searched for water. Mycorrhiza's<sup>11</sup> hair squatted completely randomly in the earth, moaning for air. And here we go again. The Detective Alice In Wonder—landed into the depths of his imagination:

*Earth's natural internet was captivating. In myriad networks fungi and trees were friends. They cooperated and esteemed each other in good times as in bad. They were exhaustingly self-disciplined and just, yet never at odds, functioning as a perfect collective, like ants. Hidden beauty under your feet—an information highway that catalysed interaction between a large, diverse population of individuals, who were too widely separated to communicate, but unconditionally helped each other out. Nature's internet neither hated nor envied—it was someone you wanted to be friends with.*

Don Cindy, Freya Fox and Fridtjof Joker relaxed together on the grass, playing poker and listening to Herbie Hancock, while Hansen snorted in D major. He was asleep next to them, absorbed into the soft grass.

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<sup>11</sup> The symbiotic friendship between a fungus and the roots of a vascular plant.

Obviously, here and now, the Detective had failed to solve the case. But a rested Hansen, was a better Hansen.

## CHAPTER 33

A full red wine bottle jammed down the accelerator of the ketchup-coloured Chevrolet Camaro. It teetered on the edge of the bridge for a moment, the front wheel drive causing the wheels to spin helplessly over the raging torrent, before the car dived, driverless, from the Nipples Bridge into the water.

The car had been carrying a valuable and much disputed historical artefact. The handwritten manuscript of *Undouche My Heart*. Shakespeare's unpublished and only novel, now lay in the trunk of the car at the bottom of the river as it filled slowly with water. The ink was dissolving, erasing any historical evidence that the manuscript had existed at all. Forever lost.

Despite the art world going into meltdown, the Detective couldn't really get himself worked up about the whole thing. It was odd, of course. Why would someone drive such a valuable artefact into a river? Unless, as the title suggested, the book was bound to be a flop and they were trying to protect Shakespeare's reputation.

Detective oo Hansen had been big friends with William Shakespeare's last descendant, Escalus Shakespeare, back in the day. They used to go sledding together. His memories were immersed in that blue mist that had enveloped everything at that blissful time, when childhood was just, just turning into teenagehood, and Escalus and oo were merrily bedight and beautiful and bright, courageously and tirelessly rushing down the sledding hill, over and

over again, until it was night. His friendship still clung to oo's soul like a flake of purely white snow. Now houses had sprung up on the play fields of Hansen's youth. The grass had been paved over, and any snow that fell was immediately shovelled away, an inconvenience.

As well as the houses, beavers had occupied the stream that meandered along the sledding hill north of Copenhagen. The beavers altered their habitat to suit their own needs; constructed a superstructure and good-naturedly diverted the stream to soften the water pressure. Analogy: The Detective only had to pay income tax at the discounted Detective Tax Rate of 39% plus premium under the obligation of direct investment into Nikkei 225 without an escape clause according to two strictly confidential contracts with the Minister of State Lars Krølle who required in return the permission to hula-hoop naked in Hansen's garden every second Sunday of the month.

Hansen sweated. The conditions of his income statement were a complicated matter. His accountant, Gerard Depardieu had once tried to explain how the whole thing worked. After two minutes, Hansen had to shove a cheesy baguette in his mouth to resume the peaceful silence in his office. From then on, he just paid whatever Gerard told him to.

Hence, he had just transferred 40 kroner with the reference: *HERE!*

The Detective always paid his taxes. He didn't want a scandal involving off-shore finances, if he was going to be talked about, he wanted it to be for something interesting.

With the money he had saved with the Nikkei tax scheme, he bought a Burkini. (He wanted to see for himself what all the fuss was about.) The rush of cash from his pay-check had left him lightheaded and easily influenced. Advertisement-aroused, he also purchased an expensive, heavy watch which gave him a tennis elbow. Still, he bore the pain, a strange rush making his heart beat faster whenever the watch's face caught the light.

When he walked into the Botanical Garden to present his strong arm to flora and fauna the wildflowers nodded approvingly. A longhaired skater, dressed in an Iron Maiden shirt and glued to his headphones was sitting on the grass, nibbling liquorice sticks. Hansen knew this boy through his mother. She was a slightly odd lady he had met in one of his yoga classes, she dressed in long, hemp robes, even when she was in cow pose. For a free-spirit she set rigid boundaries for herself and her son. She had banned chemically altered foods, eggs from hens that didn't have at least two fields and a small stream to frolic in, and she had convinced herself she was gluten intolerant since too many people were already lactose intolerant. This meant this under-spätzled boy had to snack gluten-free. Now his mother was nearly a Beganese: she only really ate beans. What did that bean? While other kiddos had burgers, pizza and pasta, the under-spätzled boy ate always beans. Basta! The only treat the boy was allowed was liquorice and he snacked at the chance for a taste of sugar.

What if the poetic murderer shared this restriction? Over the years Hansen himself had

developed a deep attachment to liquorice. It had been a candy of choice for him in childhood, as it was easily carried in pockets and acted as good sustenance when he ventured further afield. But the same root, which he consistently consumed over the years, reminded him increasingly of the more burdensome moments of his childhood. Perhaps the murderer felt the same, perhaps he remembered clutching at the roots as his father yelled at his mother, imagining himself striking his father over the head with it. Perhaps he remembered sitting in the dentist, preparing to have his teeth pulled out due to his taste for the candy. This may have made the murderer furious at the root, encouraging him to commit atrocities with the very instrument that had wreaked havoc on his life.

Nonsense! The information was just twisted. The Detective thought of the skater boy, wondering whether the liquorice would cause the evil lurking inside him to pop out, then realised that death metal would probably deal with any unresolved anger issues. The boy was obviously wiser than he looked. Still he was worthy of an entry in the Detective's notebook.

*"Look: in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with Falafel, and the Word was Falafel. And suddenly everywhere was Falafel, and the Word was a metaphor for our hustle."*

*Burp!* A burp. Then another. Then a third. The Botanical Garden was governed by nothing but peace, frogs, and a burping boy, who was drinking cacao in a fever. (A burp is like a verb—it declares that the beverage tastes superb.) His long hair askew, the skater boy finished the chocolate milk, a gift from an

unknown stranger, and lay back on the grass, high on sugar and diary.

Here everything began, and everything should end. Conifers encircled the long-tongued pond. The Detective stood at the waterside and observed a pack of sticklebacks drawing patterns on the surface. Hungry perches chased them along. A grey heron, standing still, presented his Froshobalo<sup>12</sup>, following, with a tilted head, the swarming sticklebacks. *SPLASH!* With a headlong dive it detained a capital roach and gobbled it up, vertically, down its long throat. The roach had no chance. Biological unity due to diversity. But it was a bad trap. The heron puked it out—it was a crumpled plastic bag.

This bestirred a brilliant idea. The Detective would set up another trap for the poetic murderer. He'd released the shrub molester Dick Aster into the virgin fauna. It was risky, but Aster's perverted adventures in the shrubs would certainly startle the poetic murderer and cause him to leap into action, it was clear the murderer was after anyone who acted wrongly.

The Detective set the scene, calling Dick Aster and threatening him into appearing. Despite his hatred of the police, he knew he'd need back up, so he called them too. Then he lay in wait. And, indeed, the murderer was already on his way.

To camouflage his activities, the murderer drove an egg wagon and delivered eggs to vegan restaurants. The egg wagon parked right in front of the Botanical

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<sup>12</sup> Froshobalo: a haircut with the front short, and the back long. A mullet.



Garden. The driver's lofty, lacquered boots brushed over the gravel in the key of C major. One may have picked out the tunes of a few very popular radio hits. Accompanied by the melody of his boots, the man disappeared into the shrubs, which Dick Aster was about to examine very closely. Dick Aster had been on the murderer's radar for a long time.

Hansen watched all this through a gap in one of the shrubs. This was *the* big chance to catch the mysterious man. The new police president—Admiral of the Feet Sir Tennis Sock was approaching the garden with smelly steps, gun-raised.

Then everything went fucking fast. oo Hansen hurried towards them through the shrubs, within earshot of Dick Aster. The latter was so close to the shrubs that he must have been on first-name terms with them.

In his anti-gravity shoes, the dude with the egg wagon approached Dick Aster silently. When he stood right behind him, ready to cut his throat with an opened bean container, the Detective popped out of his hideaway and screamed twice:

"Put the container down! Put the container down!" The centrifugal force of planetary orbit dizzied the Detective for a fraction of a second. This was enough for the murderer to take action. Dick Aster was dead. Another kink in the statistics.

The murderer fled, dodging the bullets flung from the police officer's gun easily. Hansen watched him go, his hands preoccupied with trying to stem the flow of blood from Aster, but his throat was cut open, bubbling blood, unceasingly like the head of a fountain, bubbling up. It was a bloody torrent

carrying bits of larynx, tonsils, glands, and slimy beans, which ruined the grass's hairdo. It looked disgusting and, overcome, Hansen laid what was left of Aster onto the grass and backed away.

Poetic notes were scattered all around. Aster's former chest appeared as a random piece of flesh with a head half hanging from it, his shirt had been ripped off in the struggle and on his bare skin the murderer had engraved, with the opened bean container, a rugged M—Mikkel Jørgensen! Evidence that he must be the murderer? If that was the case, was his friend Pétur in on it too? Had Pétur not appeared wherever the strange fellow had been hiding, had Pétur been misleading him all this time? This weighed heavy on the Detective's spine.

The new police president moved closer to the murder scene. The success-massaged Hansen was fearing his nearing defeat. A life without fame and bitches and champagne splashing over nipples was unimaginable... to the new police president. But to the Detective, it was impossible.

Quickly, he decided to do the unthinkable, he would set up Admiral of the Feet Sir Tennis Sock as the murderer.

Hansen leapt into the pond, and seized some seaweed. Hidden behind a conifer, he hung the seaweed off his face as camouflage. When Sir Tennis Sock passed by, murmuring to himself and attempting to look busy until the actual police came, oo flung a handful of fir needles into his face to dazzle him.

In the shade of the conifer, Hansen knocked Admiral of the Feet Sir Tennis Sock out with a rum

punch. Carefully, the Detective prepared the scene. His seaweed-covered hands disguised his identity by concealing Hansen's finger prints with algae. The bean container found a new dwelling place in the president's right hand. (Hint: the police president's hands were interlocked and the right thumb was uppermost.)

The Detective took a few pictures for evidence. Dr Beetle would later use these to document the successful arrest of the poetic murderer. He would then leave Hansen a holiday note: *Next stop Hanoi! See you in a few weeks.*

Hansen had hidden the president in the egg wagon. It was a short-sighted act, the Detective admitted, but he had little choice! The Detective played with a yo-yo to relax. Meanwhile the forensics did their job, but could not resist Hansen's skilful play. The swaggering yo-yo hypnotised them. When they had finished crawling along the grass in white suits, looking fruitlessly for the murder weapon or any signs of the murderer, Hansen secretly drove away to hide the police president in his attic. The Garra Rufa fish looked at him sceptically as he dropped Admiral of the Feet Sir Tennis Sock onto the floor. The president lamented like a whiny loser.

oo Hansen was back. The newspapers hailed him:

**00 Hansen—Best Detective Ever!  
Five Times in a Row**

That same night, his wife was ready to meet him in the fish restaurant, Holibutt.

*Many people didn't know this, but the word beer originated from a fairy old tale. Once upon a time the people of Plitvice, Croatia, worshipped The Goddess of Beer—Pivarra.*

*Pivarra was a shrewd alchemist and brewed, out of malt, hops, yeast and the purest water, a magic drink. The water came from a lake, high in the hills above Plitvice, and it was so pure that the many carp who swam in its waters were unemployed, played chess, and fornicated all day. Every year, in early spring, the snow upon the highest plateau melted. The melted snow became the smoothest waterfalls and poured the freshest water into the crystal-clear lake. When all the snow had melted, Pivarra played the balalaika to signal that it was time. Excited as a rhyme is to meet another line, the people of Plitvice rumbled, wrestled, and stumbled over each other to be the first to reach the heel of the canyon, down which Pivarra would roll a barrel of the season's finest brew.*

*The unique purity of Plitvice's lakes was the reason for the brew's exceptional taste. But not only was Pivarra's brew absolutely delicious; the legend promised that one drop was enough to heal every disease, and confer eternal fortune upon the drinker.*

*The people stood with cups in their hands, hoping to catch some of the precious drops, and yet, in all the years Privarra rolled the barrel down to them, never once did the divine liquid reach the people. Most of time, the barrel burst close to the top, on a rock, and the beer trickled off. And if the barrel stayed intact, which was against the odds, the barrel burst only a few metres away from the people, its contents trickling down the unreachable ebony crevice. All the people got to hear was the terrible sound of the bursting barrel: beeeeeeeershhh!*

*The legendary tale was told a million times to people all over the world and thus adapted. The many versions told resulted in a shortening of the sound to a sheer: beer!*

*That's why, today, we call the divine brew produced from malt, hops, yeast and water—beer! Still rumours circulated that a mysterious man, who lived in the woods north of Copenhagen, brewed up a few barrels of the beer, every year, in accordance with Pivarra's original formula, and shared it with his friends, who gave it the name: Øloquent. The man's beer conferred an irresistible power of free speech and a seductive eloquence of flow and force to the drinker, so that every imaginable doubt vanished by the time the first cup was emptied, and the subsequent words spoken appealed to the body, with the wit and language of the soul. This might have been the reason why the legend promised that Pivarra's brew could heal diseases.*



The Goddess of Beer: Pivarra

## CHAPTER 34

The Detective acted casual, and, slowly, he regained the trust of his wife. Assisted by a powerful sequence of finely selected words and the bouquet of exquisite wines, she nodded, and smiled, and even ordered a beer, although she hated beer, quite.

That night they kissed. In spite of everything, it felt fake. The Detective's lips were not as soft as they once were and his skin felt plastic. His eyes looked different, less blue even in the light of the fish tanks. Was it really even him?

Detective oo Hansen was as free as a stallion and gathered esprit as he ascended the pathway to the cave. A hornet flew past his ear, whistling like a tennis ball. Yesterday afternoon, he had arranged a meeting with Mikkel Jørgensen via telepathy. He had totally forgotten that he knew how to do that.

Mikkel welcomed Hansen with a Jørgensenesque pirouette at the cave. Both expressed mutual respect by rubbing each other's ear lobes three times. Twice to the left, once right—chimpanzee style. Then they walked to the boat house nearby. Mikkel told the Detective that he had read his poems on Dr Beetle's blog and fallen in love with him under the influence of *Øloquent*. Sip happens!

That's why he had agreed to meet and reveal the last remaining secret.

The Detective already knew that Mikkel had an alibi. Several witnesses affirmed that he was attending flute lessons at the times of the murders. Mikkel had done as he pleased, had come and

disappeared, relentlessly pursued his dreams, fancied fun times, and caused scandals. But all this information was as old as Gandalf, murder was a different matter. For all that Mikkell was, he just wasn't a murderer.

They reached the boat house. A terrible smell seeped under the crack, flies buzzed against the windows, eager to enter the small wooden shack. Hansen's ears prickled, it had all the signs of another murder scene. He flung the door open.

On the blood-stained floor lay two corpses. Poems and zwieback were scattered all around, flies hovered longingly. One corpse was wrapped up in rice paper. The other corpse belonged to a man in a dishevelled dress. The Detective examined the corpses. First, he unwrapped the rice paper. It was a woman. No, wait—you guessed right! It was a transvestite! Between *her* legs was a dangling appendix. The Detective nodded understandingly.

The poetic murderer was a misogynist. He also dressed up in women's garments as he wanted to be closer to his worst enemy, he had seen this on a TV show, and he obtained the greatest possible satisfaction from murdering innocent women with goods from the food market, as he was obsessed with food.

This time he had crept up on his victim and strangled her with an eel. Afterwards he had wrapped her up in rice paper, and carried the dead woman to the abandoned boat house. He was very sick.

Now the Detective examined the other corpse. In the inside pocket of the dead man's bedraggled dress



he found an ID. *Name: Detective 00 Hansen. Profession: Algae.* All data matched the Detective's. Hansen's heart beat at full speed. OMG! Did this mean...?

Suddenly, at the end of the boat house, an imaginary door opened.

"Ahoy, Detective. My name is Heming Earnestway. Welcome to my new story: A Farewell to Fancy. Please follow me!"

"No, thanks." Hansen thought.

He somersaulted out of the bright light, which was entering through the boat house's window. A few quick steps and he was back on the street.

The Detective strolled to his office. He arrived. He was alone. He smiled as brightly as the sun, looking at the many pinned notes on the wall. Well, he had been dreaming for quite a while. He smiled again. So glad he was that he had rejected Heming Earnestway's offer.

The columns, like those of Corinthian capitals, gaped unemotionally as Hansen approached Holibutt, the fish restaurant where his wife was dining with another man.

The door sprang open and in he came, freshly as beer foam into a glass; there was triumph and delight in his lilting eyes. Finally, after extended hygge times, he could present his enigmatic behaviour in the proper light. The police president Admiral of the Feet Sir Tennis Sock sweated, as he was still anxious about the fact that he had kissed the Detective's stunning wife. At least now he could take off the sweat-pooling Detective 00 Hansen mask (especially the wig, which itched horribly).

Unexpectedly, 00 Hansen put on his jackpot-winning smile and held out his fist. And their fists bumped. His wife was overwhelmed to see the Detective, but still upset, grimacing like a kiddo on PlayStation prohibition. Despite this, Hansen had one last ace up his sleeve. A fishing matter: from his poetic friend he had learned, at a krill's pace, the skill to master a line—

Composed like a stone,  
 Silent like a fish,  
 Ongoing like a flow,  
 A line—a net—a catch.  
 Comes krill, comes whale!

Detective 00 Hansen had solved another tricky case, and he was positive that his poetic arts would cool the temperature of his wife's hardboiled beliefs. Outweighing his personal fortune was the fact that Copenhagen was safe and groovy once more, due to his masterful ability to be *hygge*; his incomplete consciousness of the present moment; and a sixth sense for seeing through people's illusory façades, whose shellfish intentions were eternally creative like clouds—the ocean of the world, upside down.

Patato Optimum<sup>13</sup> was achieved, and everybody could dance.

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<sup>13</sup> Patato Optimum, named after the legendary percussionist, Carlos 'Patato' Valdes (1926–2007), is the condition under which it is impossible to improve the situation of a group of people without worsening it for someone else. The phenomenon was first observed and verified by a series of experiments called the *Dancefloor Experiments*, which were conducted in Copenhagen in 2014 by the anonymous researcher 00 Nashen.

The waiter had just served the starter, when a fire broke out in a Californian ecosystem. But that almond did not matter at the moment. The dissonant rhythm of jazz tickled Hansen's feet to move onwards.

Thirstysevensips ago, he had received a message from Dr Beetle. A heartbroken Shawarma paladin had called to make an enquiry. A man had gone berserk and threatened several guests in the Dalai Shawarma restaurant with a shawarma spear. According to Max Fresh, who had stood behind the attacker in the line and witnessed the act, the furious man had shouted, several times: "Who's the Don?" An allusion to the godfather Don Döner? Perhaps the Shawarma Mafia was involved!

Another case was in place, so Detective oo Hansen had no time to waste. On his way out, he pistoled into the waiter's tip-ridden face: "You! Tell my wife I (Wifi) love her." He handed him a napkin. On it was a poem!

The world was just about to gain a vague understanding of oo Hansen's octopus-like handling of detective work when he left the restaurant. Many odd adventures were yet to come, without a doubt unsolvable by the methods of the police. Detective oo Hansen would come back. He always did. Cheers!

THE END

With a sincere hangover,  
DETECTIVE oo HANSEN

Last but not leaked, the poem:

*Uncertain suits, passengers of the past  
At whom I dressed ages long since,  
Are fever and vision to my very heart;  
Shall I take you with abandoned little prince?  
For thy spirit haunts me: come here, come pass!  
At the end of the tunnel is one light only  
To breathe, to believe, reaches magic breath deep,  
Restores youthful will at the bottom of moment.*

*You bring back the spell that flashes the play  
And stimulate variety and freshness again,  
As aren't I connoisseur and legend of the old days?  
Illusive the fortune alters shape like amoeba,  
And many an ill-apostrophe on the diverging path,  
My journey through life's jungle diverse art—  
As the tropics must burn and Lapland must freeze,  
Africa hungry and the king be obese.*

*My dearest memories of old friends and old loves,  
That few silent souls with the same music at heart,  
So far from me present who were close in the past,  
Still echo great force to invent avant-garde.  
Now, as all voices turn to be drunk with one colour,  
Time slips away for old dreams to revive,  
To which path's struggle they might follow down,  
Whom once it moved, matters still the same light?*

*And I pursue—øloquence. That is, to speak as you feel,  
Dressed in a cloudless smile, appealing to the whole,  
With wit and the language of the soul;  
For why so many tug in the morass of false morality,  
Dangle down their styles as if Thai basil too dry;*

*To shine, your own self must be true.  
Hippopotamus! Isn't this obvious—be you, just!  
The tears of division are clinging with furious lust*

*And the dreams of the old are real to me today.*